A GUIDE
TO THE EPISTLES

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST;

OR THEIR CONTENTS EXPLAINED,

WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL APPLICATION,
AND FOR PRAYER.

SERVING AS A CONTINUATION OF

A GUIDE TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.
THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.
THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

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A GUIDE
TO THE EPISTLES.

THE FIRST

EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE SECOND

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PREFACE.

HAVING brought the Guide to the Acts of the Apostles to a close, the Author desires to express his thankfulness for the continued encouragement which has accompanied the monthly publication of that work; and his sense of the mercy and goodness of God in enabling him to carry it on for two years, added to the ten during which he had published the former work, the Cottager's Guide to the New Testament.

The statement made in the preface to the Guide to the Acts of the Apostles will apply in every particular to the present work, which will be carried on, as before, in monthly numbers. The only difference between the two will consist in an alteration in the mode of printing the text of the Scripture. It may be hoped that the mode employed in the present work may be considered an improvement, and especially as being more adapted to the character of the subject matter of the Epistles. The nature of the alteration will be explained in some separate remarks, in the "Helps in reading the Epistles of St. Paul."

The Epistles will be taken in the order in which they were written, according to the account given in the Guide to the Acts. They will follow thus:—

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians, written from Corinth, A.D. 50.

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The Epistle to Philemon, from Rome, A.D. 60.
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The Epistle to Titus, from Philippi, A.D. 64.
The First Epistle to Timothy, from Nicopolis, A.D. 65.
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THE GENERAL EPISTLES.

The First Epistle of Peter, from Babylon in Egypt, A.D. 59.
The Epistle of James, from Jerusalem, A.D. 61.
The Second Epistle of Peter, from Rome, A.D. 65.
The Epistle of Jude, A.D. 65 or 66.
The First Epistle of John, A.D. 68 or 69.
The Second Epistle of John, A.D. 68 or 69.
The Third Epistle of John, A.D. 68 or 69.

HELPS
IN READING THE EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.

The writings of St. Paul beautifully illustrate the power and capacity of the divine Scriptures. Great truths lie plainly upon the surface in a manner which can reach the simplest mind; while at the same time, the style of the whole is such as requires the exercise of thought with care and diligence, in order to embrace the subject in its completeness; and the more care and diligence are used, the greater the depths of knowledge and wisdom discovered.

In order the more readily to adapt the points of application that may be suggested to the subjects in each portion, they will not be stated in a manner so distinctly separated from each other as in the former parts of the work. It will be found that one point of application may arise so naturally from the preceding point, that the thoughts will flow so as to combine them; and for this reason questions will not be suggested after each Application as before, but more condensed hints for self-examination will be placed after the last of each portion, to assist in preparing the mind for "the Prayer." The particular scriptures from which each point of application is drawn, may commonly be traced by observing the parts which are given in the same line of indentation; but in order to simplify a reference to them, the verses will be noted at

the end of each Application. For the sake of more ready reference in subsequent portions to suitable applications already suggested, the numbers will be carried on throughout the whole of an Epistle, and not confined to each portion as formerly.

By an attentive reading of each portion of St. Paul's Epistles before any reference is made to the Explanation given in this Guide, difficulties may be removed, and the mind will be prepared to judge of the explanation, so as greatly to improve the knowledge it may afford. One great point with every reader should be, to obtain a view of the scope and purpose of the whole passage, before any attempt is made to apply any particular sentence:—too many are satisfied with gathering the sense of separated texts, without seeking the knowledge of the apostle's object in connexion with the general subject. To avoid this insufficient reading of the Epistles, and to assist the mind in that advantageous exercise which has been alluded to, the Scriptures will be printed in this Guide in such a manner as may afford some important "Helps;" while it will not prevent those who do not need them from reading each portion without hindrance or confusion.

These helps will consist of

First, a side column, in which a very concise indication will be given of the relation in which the Scripture placed opposite stands to the general subject on which the apostle is writing. A reference to any of these short index-words will shew at once the assistance they are calculated to afford.

Secondly, in printing the Scripture itself, instead of the common mode of indenting the words according to verses (which is the way most bibles are printed), the indentations will be made according to the divisions of the subject.

These indentations will correspond, in the first place,

with the index-words found in the side-column. The first branch of the subject will begin close to the side of the page. When the apostle leads his readers into another division of his subject, the words will begin a little further into the page. Another division will be still further indented; and so on.

To prevent confusion, the index-words will be given only to point out main branches of the subject; but lesser divisions are occasionally shewn by indentations of the sentences, without any specified head in the side-column: the mind may thus be led to observe the variety in the subject matter more minutely.

Various branches of the subject will of course occasion various degrees of indentation, so that the sentences will stand at several different distances from the side of the page; but the same branch of the subject wherever it occurs, will always have the same indentation; and thus great assistance will be derived from tracing in the page, easily and at once, all the passages which bear upon the same branch of the subject. In following a deep and difficult argument, this help will be of much importance; and will suggest many beauties in the connexion of various passages not commonly perceived. This similarity of indentations will be limited to the passages placed between two short lines a little way into the page, which are put in order to give room for beginning another series of indentations.

In order to direct the mind to similar subjects or arguments occurring in some part of the same Epistle, which happens not to be included between the lines that separate a particular division of the same indentations, the verses to which reference may be made will be inserted between brackets, thus [4], at the end of the passage in reading.

One simple key for opening to the mind the force and scope of a whole passage of Scripture is, to give due prominence to those connecting words, by which the several parts of the argument are linked together; such as WHEREFORE, THEREFORE, FOR, THEN, &c. It is a good rule in reading difficult passages to pause at every such word, and to put an appropriate question, in order to gather an answer from the context. As when THEREFORE comes, to ask *wherefore?* and in reply, to find out why THEREFORE is used. If WHEREFORE, or FOR, to ask *what?* If THEN, to ask *when?* In order to suggest to the reader the occasions on which these inquiries would be advantageously made, all such connecting words in the text are printed in capital letters.

The object to be attained by the arrangement of these "Helps" is, that the reader's mind should be induced to exercise itself, so as to gather a clear notion of the scope of the passage. Thus prepared, the explanation that follows will be read with more interest, and become doubly useful.

Some persons however may not feel the advantage of these "Helps;" and many will not require them. In either case the manner of printing the Scripture will be no hindrance, as every word is printed consecutively as in the authorized version; and the whole is properly punctuated, so that the text may be read without reference to the side-column, or the indentations. While on the other hand, the arrangement may be an important assistance to those who really need it, and who will take the trouble, once for all, to acquaint themselves with the advantages to be obtained by making use of these "HELPS IN READING THE EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL."

A GUIDE TO THE EPISTLES.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

WRITTEN AT CORINTH, A.D. 50.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS letter was written by the Apostle Paul, from Corinth, to the christians at Thessalonica in Macedonia. In order properly to understand the purport of the letter, it will be necessary to call to mind the circumstances of Paul's connection with that church. They took place in the year 49, and are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles xvii. 1—10. The explanation given of that passage in the "Guide to the Acts of the Apostles" (page 220) is in the following words:—

"From Philippi Paul, with Silas and Timothy, proceeded to Amphipolis; but it is supposed that Luke remained for the present at Philippi. Amphipolis was the capital city of one part of Macedonia; but we hear of nothing which occurred there, or at the next city called Apollonia; though that was also a very populous place, and the missionaries seem to have travelled some distance out of their direct way, in order to pass through it. From Apollonia they went to Thessalonica, a very important seaport town, where a great deal of commerce was carried on; and where there were a large number of Jews, and of course a synagogue. Paul never failed to address himself first to the Jews, wherever he found any of that people in the places he visited: accordingly he went into the

synagogue at Thessalonica, and there instructed the Jews, by explaining the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and proving that the Messiah, whom they expected in his glory to restore the kingdom to Israel, must necessarily, according to the same Scriptures, have died in the first place, and risen again from the dead; and then he declared that Jesus, whom he preached to them, was the very Messiah promised in the Old Testament. He continued to teach in this manner for three successive sabbath days; and some of his Jewish hearers received the preaching of Paul in faith, and joined themselves to the missionaries; besides these, a great number of proselytes (who not being Jews by birth had become such by admission) believed the gospel and followed the apostle, together with many of their wives and other respectable women who attended the synagogue.

This great movement in favour of the gospel greatly exasperated the Jews who resisted the preaching of Paul. They were jealous of the influence he had thus obtained, and they employed some of the worst and lowest of the people to gather a mob, and raise a riotous disturbance against the missionaries, who lodged at the house of a person named Jason. The mob assembled before Jason's house with shouts and cries, desiring to have Paul and Silas given up to them. They were not however to be found in the house; and so the mob seized upon Jason and some of the newly converted christians who were with him, and hurried them away to the magistrates. The cry against them was, that some of the christians, who were said to turn the world upside down, had come to Thessalonica, where Jason harboured them—that they were all persons dangerous to the government of the country, acting contrary to the laws of the Roman emperor, and setting up the authority of another person, one Jesus, as king. This accusation excited the crowd, and alarmed the magistrates, who however contented themselves by taking security of Jason and his companion for the maintenance of the public peace; after which they dismissed them. Paul and Silas had not been found by the mob, and the christians would not allow them to expose themselves to danger from their violence; but constrained them to leave

the city in the night time, taking the road to a place not far off, called Berea.

From the circumstances recorded in this portion, the missionaries could have remained at Thessalonica very little more than three weeks or a month. During that time, though the success of the gospel was very great, yet they determined not to be burthensome for their support upon the new converts; and in order to avoid this Paul supported himself by labouring with his own hands, probably at the occupation of tentmaking, (as he afterwards did at Corinth, Acts xviii. 3.) He refers to this in both the letters which he afterwards wrote to the church in Thessalonica. (1 Thess. ii. 9. 2 Thess. iii. 8.) It might seem perhaps that the expence of their living could have been but a small burthen; but we learn from history, that during this very year there was a great scarcity, almost amounting to a famine, all over that part of the Roman empire in which Paul was travelling; so much so that the price of corn rose to six times as much as in an ordinary season. This not only tends to explain the apostle's anxiety not to cause any additional expence, both to the christians in Thessalonica, and afterwards at Corinth in this same year; but it also accounts for the promptness of the newly-planted church at Philippi in sending supplies of money after their beloved Paul, to secure him from the want he was so likely to have felt. Twice during the course of the few weeks the apostle remained at Thessalonica, the christians at Philippi thus ministered to his necessities. He mentions this with thankful approbation in the letter he afterwards wrote to the Philippians. (Phil. iv. 15, 16.)"

This first Epistle to the Thessalonians was written a few months afterwards from Corinth, and the occasion of it was explained in the Guide to the Acts of the Apostles (page 231) thus:—

"Upon Paul's arrival at Athens, he felt great anxiety, lest the manner in which he had been treated should have the effect of unsettling the minds of the recently converted christians at Thessalonica. He feared lest they should have been tempted to imagine, that the gospel could not have come from God, since when the preacher of it was so left to the cruel persecutions of those who oppose it; and

that thus his hopeful labours at Thessalonica might fail of producing the happy results he had anticipated. Paul therefore determined to send Timothy to confirm the faith of the Thessalonian christians, and to remind them how he had warned them that the preachers of the gospel were appointed to suffer afflictions in that great cause."

Afterwards when Paul was at Corinth, "his dear friend and son in the faith, Timothy, came to him having executed the commission on which he had been sent to Thessalonica. The satisfactory report which Timothy brought of the state of the church in Thessalonica was the occasion that led Paul, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to write a letter to the christians there. This is the first of those epistles which have been preserved in the church, for its edification in all times and places, and is called the first epistle to the Thessalonians." (Guide to the Acts, page 237.)

PORTION FIRST.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 THESSALONIANS I., II. 1—16.

INDEX WORDS.	
The salutation.	I. Paul and Sylvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians *which is* in God the Father and *in* the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
The Apostle's gratitude with prayer.	2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;
One occasion of it.	3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;
a *second* occasion of it.	4 knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God [or, *beloved of God, your election*].
The reason given—*first*	5 FOR our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance [4];
second	as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.
third	6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:
fourth	7 so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia.
its results—*first*	8 FOR from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.
second	9 FOR they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you,
	and how ye turned to God from idols to serve
	10 the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

reason *(second)* enlarged. *but*

II. 2 FOR yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: BUT even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with

for 3 much contention. FOR our exhortation *was* not of

but 4 deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: BUT as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but

for 5 God, which trieth our hearts. FOR neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a

6 cloke of covetousness; God *is* witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have been burdensome [or,

but 7 *used authority*], as the apostles of Christ. BUT we were gentle among you, even as a nurse

8 cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our

for 9 own souls, because ye were dear unto us. FOR ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you

10 the gospel of God. Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and justly and unblameably we

11 behaved ourselves among you that believe: as ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father *doth* his children,

12 that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Hence the gratitude.

13 FOR THIS CAUSE also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

14 FOR ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ

for Jesus: FOR ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the

15 Jews: who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us [or, *chased us out*]; and they please not God, and

16 are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill

for up their sins alway: FOR the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

EXPLANATION.

In the time of the apostle, it was customary to begin a letter by stating the name of the person writing it, and that of the person to whom it was addressed; and the same courtesy which requires a writer in the present day

before signing his name, to close his letter with some suitable civility (as "your obedient servant," or "yours faithfully") was expressed in those days by a proper salutation at the opening. Instances of this occur in Acts xv. 23, and xxiii. 26. In compliance with this custom, Paul begins this letter by stating that it is written from himself, in company with his two companions in travel, the same who had been with him during his short ministry in Thessalonica—Silvanus, or Silas, (the latter being a short manner of speaking of the former name) and Timothy. It is addressed to those persons in the city of Thessalonica who, having been converted to the truth by that Spirit who unites christians with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Lord, had become "the church of the Thessalonians." As a suitable salutation between such parties, the apostle desires that the christians at Thessalonica may be blessed with grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle then expresses the feelings of gratitude to God with which he always reflected upon the whole body of christians in Thessalonica; and he assures them that his thanks to God were accompanied with prayer for them. He accounts for this;—he never forgot the manner in which they manifested the powerful working of faith, and the diligent exercise of love, and the constant patience resulting from the firm hope with which they expected the fulfilment of all the promises of the Lord Jesus Christ—this faith, hope, and charity, manifested not only before men, but as in the sight of God—of Him whom they claimed as Father. And besides this, Paul knew that these brethren, beloved of God, were of the number of His chosen ones. On both these accounts the apostle gave thanks to God, and made mention of the Thessalonian christians in his prayers.

Paul proceeds to justify this gratitude by several reasons. He had not brought to them the mere statement of the gospel in word only, but it had come upon them in power, with the influence of the Holy Spirit himself; and it had been received in assured and complete conviction of its truth and divine mission. Again, the Thessalonians knew how Paul had conducted himself whilst with them;

and then, having observed his christian conduct, they had taken the example, and imitating him had followed the way of the Lord Jesus, whose doctrine they had received; in the midst of all the trouble and distress which resulted to them, feeling the joy which the Holy Ghost imparts. Thus they became as specimens or models for others who embraced the gospel to resemble, both in the province of Macedonia in which they lived, and also in the neighbouring province of Achaia.

The effect of the bright example of christianity shining in Thessalonica was, that the gospel became known as though it had been proclaimed publicly, not only in those two provinces, but even beyond them; in all quarters the faith towards God which characterized the Thessalonian church was the general subject of conversation, in a manner which made it unnecessary for Paul to speak about it; and those who thus conversed were able to give an account of Paul's preaching in that city, his reception and success. They told the effect that had been produced there:—idolaters had left the worship of inanimate wood and stone, carved into the form of false gods, in order to devote themselves to the service of the living and the true God; in doing which they were awaiting the return from heaven of the Son of that God, who had been raised up from amongst those who had died, and had gone to heaven—this was Jesus, whose atonement has set his people free from the impending anger of God.

Having referred to the fact that the Thessalonians knew how he had conducted himself whilst with them, Paul now appealed to that knowledge by a more enlarged review of particulars. They were well aware that his mission amongst them had not been fruitless. They knew that he had been exposed to great suffering and shameful treatment at Philippi, just before his arrival at Thessalonica; this had not daunted him from preaching the gospel to the Thessalonians, but in spite of the past experience, he boldly proclaimed the message of God with much earnestness, in the face of danger. Why should he not have been bold in doing this? His conscience witnessed that his message was not falsely stated, nor with double and dishonest motives, nor put forth with cunning artifice;

but as he was entrusted by God with the commission to preach the gospel, his teaching was characterized accordingly, not as seeking to gain the approbation of men, but rather studying to please God who searches the hearts of his ministers for the discharge of their trust. The apostle could appeal to the Thessalonians for testimony that he had not at any time made use of flattering words in his ministry (which would have been the case if he had sought to please men); and he could appeal to God, the searcher of hearts, to testify that his preaching had never covered a motive of personal advantage. As one evidence of this, he had never sought to obtain personal praise and influence with any (either those to whom he was writing, or any other persons) when he might have employed his authority as an apostle of Christ in requiring them to support him. Instead of this he had treated them with parental tenderness, such tenderness as a nursing mother would use towards the babe at her breast. With such a yearning affection had he desired their good, that he was ready and willing not only to communicate to them the gospel of God, but also to give them his own soul for the love he had towards them. Surely they must recollect how he had supported himself by the labour of his own hands, to do which he had been forced to employ parts of the night as well as the day in his work; and this he had done in order that while he was preaching the gospel to them, he might do it without laying a burthen upon any person. He thus appealed to the Thessalonians as witnesses (and he could appeal to the testimony of God also), that his conduct amongst the church there had been holy towards God and just towards men, and such as could not be blamed; while they were also aware that he had urged upon them in every way to pursue a similar course of conduct themselves—he had exhorted them, and encouraged them, and commanded every one of them, as a father might use all those methods of influence with his children, in order to induce them to conduct themselves in a manner suitable to their position, as persons called by God into His kingdom through grace now, leading up to glory hereafter.

It was thus that Paul was able to thank God unceasingly

because the Thessalonians, in receiving the gospel brought to them in this manner by him, had not considered it to be the word of a man, but had received it as that which it truly is—the word of God, which had become operative and effectual in the hearts of those amongst the Thessalonians who truly believed it. This effectual working was manifest; the church at Thessalonica had acted just in the same way as the Hebrew christians had acted in Judea. The unconverted Thessalonians had persecuted the church there in a manner similar to that in which unconverted Jews had persecuted the Hebrew-christian church. Those Jews had taken the life of the Lord Jesus, as they had also done to their prophets of old—they had driven his apostles from their native land by severe persecution—they sought not God themselves, and they opposed all other men in seeking Him—they had endeavoured to prevent the apostles from preaching the gospel to the Gentiles in order that they might be saved—but thus acting they filled up every way the measure of their iniquities, because God's wrath had come upon them to the very utmost.

APPLICATION.

1. This word of God is addressed to the church "which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ;" and although it was drawn forth from the apostle by the circumstances and position of that portion of the church then in existence, and dwelling in Thessalonica, yet the Holy Spirit who gave the word, also adapted it to the need and for the instruction of the church of all generations and all places. The description of the people addressed must be taken, not as to the inferior point of the locality in which they were in the body, but as to the superior point of the communion in which they are, in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the qualification for which each individual professor must strive, in order to appropriate the promises, and apply the exhortations here addressed to the church. All such persons will feel, that the salutation of the apostle expresses their great need—the church needs continually grace—the favour of God in Christ—and peace through

the blood of his cross, that reconciles them to the Father who affords the comfort of His Holy Spirit. (i. 1).

2. The earnest prayerfulness of the apostle on behalf of his spiritual children manifests itself in the very opening of his letter: "making mention of you in our prayers" —here is the true vent for christian affection. The love that grows in the heart in connexion with spiritual interests, and with the glory that shall be revealed at the Lord's coming, is sure to find its expression by presenting its object before the throne of grace. We shall have abundant occasion to observe the indications of this prayerful spirit in the Apostle, and to find reasons for seeking to imitate it. Attention is only drawn to it now, that at the very outset of St. Paul's Epistles the mind may be directed to observe the future frequent recurrence of the same Spirit. (i. 2, 3.)

3. But this prayerfulness is combined with an abiding thankfulness to God, for the evident success which His blessing had given to the Apostle's preaching, manifested by the result—a thankfulness that gave a tone and character to his whole feeling; and which, flowing continually from his heart in prayer, had reference to each and all of those thus brought into Christ's church. Thankfulness for spiritual mercies to others, is a feeling that expands the capacities of a christian's heart to a degree far beyond what the world conceive possible. (i. 2, 13.)

4. When the occasion for this feeling is observed, the benefit imparted by a gracious God will be seen to be such as called for enlarged gratitude. The evidence of the work of faith in the conduct of the new christians—the diligence which had its spring in christian love—the calm forbearing in patience, that displayed the power of an assured hope—what greater blessing could have been bestowed than a combination of faith, hope, and charity, so wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost as to bring forth abundant fruit—fruit that made sure the calling and election of those in whom it appeared. The Apostle indeed may have been favoured with an inspired knowledge

on this point with respect to the Thessalonians, but without such inspiration we may "give diligence to make our calling and election sure" (2 Pet. i. 10), by prayerful spiritual efforts to manifest similar fruits. (i. 3.)

5. There was good reason for all this; the ground of it was securely fixed in the manner in which the Gospel had been received. It was not simply a knowledge of facts that had been attained, nor a correct view of a system of doctrines; the letter of the gospel might convey all this, but while "the letter killeth, the Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) The *power* of the gospel had been imparted, and had been received into the heart where the love of Christ was shed abroad, so that those who thus received the truth as it is in Jesus learned to love him because He first loved them. It was the work of the Spirit producing such a conviction of faith as could not be shaken. It is upon the ground of the gospel thus received in the power of its love and its truth that the fruits which make our calling and election sure will grow. We must have this, if we would cause the rejoicing of gratitude to those who have brought Christ to our hearts. (i. 5, 13.)

6. Christians thus established are truly shining lights in the world. A brilliant example is one of the most effectual means of proclaiming the gospel for Christ's glory, to those who do not know it. It is sounded out in the quiet conversation of true christians—it is heard from every footstep of his walk. Especially a course of confident consistency with christian principles is of the greatest value, as a means of preparing minds for a due appreciation of the power of that truth which is seen to uphold one who professes it when in difficult positions. This was clearly displayed in the effect produced amongst the Thessalonians by the courageous consistency of the apostle with the principles he preached, when the sufferings they had brought upon him at one place had no effect in deterring him from preaching them, with equal boldness under similar danger, in another. He could appeal to this as an evidence of the power of that truth, which made him bold, in spite of every hindrance; and such an

example, applied under the teaching of divine grace, had the effect of settling others in a similar course, enduing them with a similar boldness, and enabling them to set up a similar example, which again had the same powerful effect in an extended circle. However prominently this boldness of consistency might rank among the features of christian character in the apostle's example, yet it did not stand alone; but he could appeal to a whole cluster of christian graces, which the Lord had enabled him to manifest amongst the Thessalonians, while he was directing attention to the manner in which divine grace had enabled them also to set an example to surrounding heathen how to turn to God from idols. How few there are, even amongst christians of no ordinary standing, who estimate rightly the vast influence of christian consistency when acting as an example to direct, as well as an argument to convince. (i. 7—12.)

7. The motives however, by which a christian may be induced to obtain this powerful influence for the extension of Christ's truth, should be carefully watched. The example of christian consistency cannot be expected to lead to such a result, unless the course of conduct be of a nature to enable us to make a solemn appeal to God, as searching the heart, at the same time that we may conscientiously call for the testimony of men, as to the unblameable nature of our outward conduct. In order to secure this effect of christian example, we must be able, while saying to the world "ye are witnesses," to add "and God also." Whatever be the result produced amongst men at the time, the account for our course of conduct must hereafter be rendered to God. It is He alone who allows any to be entrusted with the power of sounding out the gospel through the manifestation of the excellence which it produces; and in fulfilling that trust, it is Him alone that each individual must seek to please. A sense of this great truth can alone impart that courage in holding up the light of the gospel before men, which St. Paul called the Thessalonians to testify of him, and which we ought to be able to call upon our neighbours to testify

of us, while the more important appeal is made to God, who trieth our hearts. (ii. 4, 5, 10.)

8. The tenderness and earnestness which characterize the apostle's affection for his Thessalonian converts is very strikingly expressed. As an instrumental means, probably this was one of the most important of the concurring causes in producing the rapid growth and fruitfulness of true christianity amongst them. There is a winning influence accompanying the conviction, that a person who is endeavouring to persuade us is really possessed by a sincere desire to promote our good. Love so manifested works in the same way as the love of the Lord Jesus operates upon the heart that receives it—loving him because he first loved us. In order to profit in this respect, we should observe the earnestness with which the apostle puts forth the declaration, that he was willing, not merely to do a duty, by conveying the gospel message because he was charged with it, but rather to impart his own soul to them because he truly loved them. (ii. 7—9, 11.)

9. The brief teaching of the apostle at Thessalonica included the glorious doctrine of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven—a doctrine necessarily connected with that of the resurrection, and no less so with that of the deliverance wrought by His atonement, by which the wrath to come is taken away from those who, being in Christ Jesus, have no longer any condemnation to anticipate. (Rom. viii. 1.) This waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus is stated by the apostle to mark the character displayed by the converts from paganism, when they turned to God from the worship of idols; and scarcely any doctrine taught in the Scriptures is found to be more practically efficacious in loosening the heart from the secret idolatry to which it is naturally prone, than a realizing expectation of the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus; whom the heavens have received until the times of the restitution of all things; and who, when he ascended to the right hand of the Father, where he is now waiting, sent forth the message according to which his

people are warranted to expect that the same Jesus, who then was "taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven." (i. 10.)

10. At the close of this portion, the effect of unbelief in the Jews is placed in striking contrast with the effect of faith already described in the Thessalonian christians. A progress is shewn in the increasing hardness of heart, resulting from resistance to the truth, and bringing forth more distinct evidence of the heaping up of wrath. One step of sin is spoken of after another—rejecting the doctrine of the Lord Jesus, they became the instruments of his death, as their fathers had caused the death of the prophets, whom He had before sent especially to them—they drove away the preachers of the gospel from them, and thus closed up the avenues by which salvation might have come to them—their course of conduct became altogether displeasing to God, and they filled up the full measure of their iniquity by standing in the way to impede the current of God's mercy when it would flow forth to the men of other nations, commanding that no one should speak in the name of Jesus, and venting their most violent rage against those who sought to preach salvation to the Gentiles; (one instance of which occurred when they would have sacrificed Paul because he spoke of being sent by the Lord Jesus to minister the gospel to the Gentiles. Acts xxii. 21—23.) Compare this conduct with that of the Thessalonian converts, as the apostle suggests; and observe the effectual working of the influence produced by simply receiving the gospel as that which it is in truth, the word of God, and not of men, contrasted with this effectual working of the influence of that first resistance to the power of truth which called forth God's displeasure, and increased it at every step, producing the withdrawal of his grace, and resulting in the uttermost manifestation of his wrath. (ii. 14, 15.)

11. There is yet one painful application to be made of the concluding scripture of this portion. It is impossible to resist the inference to be drawn from the statement, that the Apostles were sent forth to "speak to the gentiles

that they might be saved." Well may it be said that, to forbid them thus to speak was a filling up of the measure of a man's sins, since in this expression the truth is plainly implied which is indeed directly stated by the apostle when, writing to the Romans with reference to the Gentiles he says, "as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish." (Rom. ii. 12.) If it be necessary to convey the gospel to the Gentiles, in order that they may be saved—and if, having no law but that of nature which serves only to shew how they might be a law to themselves and are not, they perish—how anxiously ought christians to use all self-denial and earnest diligence in sending missionaries "to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved," being urged the more powerfully to this duty by the thought, that possibly a careless neglect in this matter may be found to bear some marks of that character negatively, which the word of God ascribes to the Jews positively for a violent prohibition—it "filled up their sins alway"—it was a token that "the wrath was come upon them to the uttermost." (ii. 16.)

QUESTIONS.

By what tokens do I consider myself as belonging to the church which is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ?

In what degree can I be said to be habitually prayerful? and how far is my prayerfulness characterized by a cheerful gratitude? and by an enlarged brotherly love, and interest in the spiritual welfare of others?

What testimony does my conduct afford to the nature of my faith, and the source of good acts within me? Is it a testimony which justifies myself and others in being sure of my calling and election by God?

How do I estimate the Scriptures? with what amount of assurance do I consider them to be in truth the word of God?

In what proportion does the tendency of a christian's example to produce a beneficial effect on others concur with spiritual motives to decide me in a course of conduct which may be self-denying, difficult, and otherwise doubtful? With what confidence could I appeal to my own example, if circumstances should make it proper for me to do so?

To whom could I appeal with a good conscience, as having proved to them that I love them for their spiritual benefit? In what way do I strive to convey such christian counsel and warning, as it may be my duty to impart to some individuals? Is it with tenderness and anxious affection, so that they must feel I would impart to them my own soul as well as the gospel?

With what degree of interest, of expectation, and of hope, do I wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven? How far does the subject occupy my thoughts and wishes?

What am I doing for the extending of the knowledge of the gospel amongst the heathen? How much do I contribute of my personal means—my influence with others—my prayers?

THE PRAYER.

O thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I praise thy name that thou hast called me to the knowledge of thy grace and faith in thee, and thus hast brought me into thy church. Increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in me evermore; and so make me ever to abide in Christ, as a member of His true church. Bestow upon me the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and enable me ever to approach thy throne, through the mediation of thy Son our Saviour, in the power of that love which flows from him, and returns towards thee with the character of thankfulness and love. Enlarge my affections, that loving thee above all things, I may love my neighbour as myself, and find joy in that which marks spiritual life in others. Work in me to will and to do of thy good pleasure; and let thy working so manifest the character of thy holiness, that it may make my calling and election sure. Strengthen my faith, and give it power by a simple assurance of the divine truth of thy word. Make this faith so fruitful in me, that all around may see my good works, and glorify Thee the giver of every good gift. Teach me so to walk, that none may find occasion of offence in me, and that many may acknowledge the power of thy grace. Oh that I might behave myself more holily, and justly, and unblameably among those with whom I dwell! Deepen

my desire to promote the spiritual welfare of the souls of men; and give me the capacity to manifest that desire with such tenderness and affectionate consideration, that I may become the instrument of winning souls by love. Keep me ever looking for, and hasting unto, the glorious coming of thy Son from heaven, that it may be the object of my highest hope and expectation; and give me such a yearning of heart for the hastening of thy kingdom by the accomplishing of the number of thine elect, that I may be diligent and self-denying in promoting the proclamation of the gospel amongst all nations of the earth, for the extending of the glory of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. AMEN.

SECOND PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 THESSALONIANS II. 17—20; III.

INDEX WORDS.	
The apostle's desire to see them.	17 BUT we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.
	18 WHEREFORE we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.
This desire justified	19 FOR what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? [or, *glorying.*] *Are* not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?
	20 FOR ye are our glory and joy.
and testified.	III. WHEREFORE when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone;
Timothy's mission.	2 and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ,
to *establish.*	to establish you, and to comfort you concerning
lest *moved.*	3 your faith: THAT no man should be moved by these afflictions:
	FOR yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.
	4 FOR verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

Hence anxiety.

5 FOR THIS CAUSE, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

the anxiety relieved

6 BUT now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, AND THAT ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also *to see* you:

hence comfort

7 THEREFORE, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith:
8 for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

and gratitude

9 FOR what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes

with prayer.

10 before our God; night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face,
AND might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

the desire repeated in prayer

11 NOW God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct [or, *guide*] our way unto you.
12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you:

with reference to its object.

13 TO THE END he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

EXPLANATION.

The Apostle had now described the standing of the church at Thessalonica as the first occasion of his gratitude to God, who had made use of him as the instrument in thus establishing the truth amongst them; and he had largely expressed the earnestness of his personal affection for his Thessalonian converts. He proceeds now to tell them of his anxious desire to return amongst them. Having been separated from them for a little while, (a separation that was only bodily, for they had never been separated from the affections of his heart) he had watched with most earnest attention for some opportunity of accomplishing his fervent desire, by paying them a visit. (The sentence in which the Apostle states this, verse 17, is remarkable for the accumulation of affectionate expressions.) Impelled by this desire, he would oftentimes have made a journey himself personally to see them; but his purpose had been as frequently thwarted by the untoward circumstances which had been brought about by wicked men, who were acting out the devices of the evil enemy, Satan. No wonder indeed that his desire was so ardent; how could it be

otherwise, since it was drawn forth towards those whose spiritual condition formed his hope now,—whose progress and establishment in grace was a source of his joy,—and whose final salvation should be to him a crown of rejoicing and of glory, in the day when the Lord Jesus Christ should return to earth, and call his servants to the joy and glory prepared for them in his presence? The Thessalonian converts stood in this relation to Paul.

Under the strong impulse of such an affection as this, so grounded upon the anticipations of eternal glory with Christ, the apostle felt an anxiety on the behalf of the Thessalonian christians which he could not restrain; and therefore, finding it impossible for him to gratify his ardent desire to go to them himself, he did not scruple to deprive himself of the comfort and assistance which he derived from the companionship of Timothy; and to be left in very difficult circumstances alone at Athens, in order to effect his object concerning the Thessalonians by sending Timothy to them. In doing this he provided the best substitute for his own efforts amongst them, by employing one who was a brother, a minister of God, and who had worked with Paul himself in preaching the gospel of Christ. This person he had sent in his own stead, in order to settle and fix the minds of the Thessalonian christians, and to console them under the feelings they might experience in the practical developement of their faith.

The principal motive which led Paul to be thus anxious for their establishment in the faith was, the fear lest the persecutions he was suffering, and the effects resulting from them might produce such disappointment in their minds, as might shake them from the firm reliance on the truth which is the essence of faith. The manner in which the apostle had been obliged to escape from Thessalonica in the night (Acts xvii. 10), and subsequently the necessity for his secret departure from Berea (Acts xvii. 13—15), might have tended to unsettle the confidence of the newly converted christians. This was the reason why he sent Timothy to establish them, in order that no man might be moved, so as to swerve from the faith, by observing how he who had brought them the knowledge of it had been called to suffer in consequence. Paul

reminds the Thessalonians that they must be aware that, as christians, they and he were placed in a position before the world calculated to produce persecution. Indeed during his personal ministrations amongst them he had forewarned them that he should be called upon thus to snffer; and, as they well knew, the event turned out precisely as he had predicted.

It was in consequence of this anxiety which pressed upon him, that the apostle could not be satisfied without sending to ascertain the state of their faith, under the trying circumstances produced by the recent persecutions. He was alarmed lest, by some cunning device or other, Satan might have employed such temptations as through fear, or worldliness, or any other feeling, might have been successful in inducing the Thessalonians to turn back from the fellowship of the gospel; and so Paul's hope would not ripen into joy, but he might fail of receiving the crown of rejoicing he was anticipating from the church in Thessalonica; and so all his exertions in preaching the gospel to them might turn out to have been in vain.

But Timothy had executed the commission with which he was charged, and had returned to Paul, bringing the happy intelligence that the Thessalonian church continued sound in the faith, and was enlarged in christian love. He reported besides, that they remembered the apostle with gratitude and affection, and were as desirous of seeing him again as he was to see them. This information had afforded him much comfort concerning them:—in the midst of all his privations and persecutions, the assurance of their faith was a source of consolation to him—their firm continuance in Christ was indeed as life to him. How could the apostle give sufficient expression to the gratitude felt towards God for all the joy he continually experienced on their account—a joy which brought him before God in frequent communion! The feeling was so strong, that he was incessantly in prayer with great earnestness, that he might again have personal intercourse with them—not merely for the gratification of his own feelings of affection in seeing them, but in order that, by supplying what was wanting, and rectifying what was mistaken, he might carry on their faith to maturity.

Having referred to the incessant prayers which he put up that he might be permitted to see the Thessalonians again, an illustration of this prayerfulness broke forth from the apostle as he was writing. He gave vent to an earnest supplication addressed to the very God and our Father, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, entreating Him to order the ways of Providence so, that an opportunity might be afforded him to go to Thessalonica: adding a petition that the Lord would give the Thessalonians such grace as would make them increase in mutual love, even to overflowing abundance—that this love might extend towards all men, even as the love of the apostle abounded towards the Thessalonians. He prayed for this grace of love on their behalf, in order that the great object of his desire might be accomplished, and that God might thereby firmly establish their hearts in the exercise of holiness, being justified from blame before God the Father at the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He shall come with all his saints. (1 Thess. iv. 14-17. 1 Cor. xv. 51-54. Zech. xiv. 5.)

APPLICATION.

12. In the last portion, there were evident tokens of the apostle's affection for the Thessalonians; and a reference to the eighth application (see page 13) would be suitable to help in directing the mind to apply the further marks of the same affection, which are found in the present portion. The desire to see those to whom he was writing is expressed with unusual warmth of feeling. Though this would be a natural mode of gratifying the affection of his heart, yet the present gratification formed but a small part of the inducement to his desire to visit them. His main object was to settle and mature their spiritual life,—to guide their experience,—to remove the uncertainty of doubting opinions,—to confirm the views he had already imparted,—to supply instruction on any point on which his former ministrations might have been scanty,—to rectify any mistake which might have arisen in the application of what they already knew. All this is included in the intention to "perfect that which was lacking in their faith." It was this which gave force to the desire to visit

the Thessalonians, so earnestly expressed by the apostle; and such objects as these necessarily operated to promote prayer, with a power which produced incessant and abiding supplication to the throne of grace, "night and day, praying exceedingly, that he might see their face." It was the spiritual character of this feeling on behalf of the souls of others which deepened the current of the affection, and made it flow with such constancy. (See applications 2 and 3, page 11.) A love may exist in a worldly heart which may be very deep, yet if it include not the eternal benefit of the individual beloved, its continuance cannot be depended upon, however impassioned the feeling. But the affection which embraces in its desire the eternal happiness of its object is thereby carried into the presence of God by prayer, and there it becomes purified in its motives, and confirmed in its continuance. (ii. 17; iii. 1, 2, 9—11.)

13. The preceding application has pointed out one motive which produces earnestness and constancy in affection. This motive has its more direct reference to the spiritual condition of the individuals beloved; but this portion shews that another motive may concur in producing this effect, having a more immediate reference to the result upon the person in whom the affection exists. The progress and establishment of spiritual life in these converts are stated by St. Paul to bear directly upon his own happiness and future standing before God; and this may be admitted as a legitimate christian motive for that ardour and constancy which may be felt, especially by those who have been employed by God as the instruments by whom he has been pleased to enlighten and convert the souls of others. This involves a doctrine which displays the mercy of God in one of its highest manifestations. The Lord chooses his own instruments,—commits to them a dispensation of the gospel, or providentially employs them without any special commission,—commands them freely to give as they have freely received,—adds "the excellency of the power,"—works with the word thus committed to his servants; and though every step is by the operation of His own Spirit, yet it pleases him in his

mercy to apportion the gracious reward he confers upon his instruments, according to the souls gathered for glory through their instrumentality. (1 Cor. ix. 16, 17. Matt. xxv. 22, 23. Dan. xii. 3.) Hence the apostle was able to say that he had a personal hope connected with the christian standing of his converts, and an individual joy in the assured establishment of their faith; looking forward to the time when being able to present these converts "perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 22, 28) at his glorious appearing, they should be to him "a crown of rejoicing." This was his personal share of interest in their salvation, which for their own sakes also he so ardently desired to confirm and secure. How tender is the mercy of God in thus combining the most powerful motives, so as to supply a constant impulse to active affection; permitting so much of personal interest to be sanctified by the eternal and heavenly nature of its enjoyment, as may help to excite to self-denying exertions in seeking the salvation of the souls of others. (ii. 19, 20; iii. 13.)

14. The agency of the great spiritual enemy is spoken of in this portion in a very instructive manner. The apostle, who was not ignorant of Satan's devices (1 Cor. ii. 11), was alarmed lest the power of the great tempter should have so prevailed with the inexperienced christians at Thessalonica, that it should turn out that he had laboured amongst them in vain. It was under this alarm that he was so anxious to be with them, in order to guard them by confirming their faith. But he tells the Thessalonians that the external circumstances which had fallen out so as to prevent him from visiting them, had been the work of the same evil enemy. And thus it is that the faith of the people of God is permitted to be tried, and that the visible church is thereby sifted. Satan is ever on the watch, by all the means within his power to throw obstacles in the way of ministerial help being afforded to those, who, at the same time, he is striving to ensnare into the denial of the faith of Christ. It is however the comfort of the true christian to know, that none "is able to pluck him out of God's hand," and that greater is his defence than the power of the evil enemy. While God

permits the devices of Satan to seem to have success, by hindering one desired minister from being in a position to impart important counsel, He makes that very success the occasion of supplying the needful means of grace by some other instrument, divinely chosen however less desired; and at the same time he supplies those who are tempted with his whole armour, that they may thereby withstand in the evil day, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. (ii. 18; iii. 5.)

15. The main point which produced the apostle's anxiety upon the present occasion is one of very needful application in every generation of the christian church. The Thessalonian converts had but recently received the knowledge of the truth. It had indeed come to them with power; but in proportion as they felt that power to work mightily in themselves, it would seem reasonable for them to expect that it would, in some degree at least, be effectual with others; and until they could obtain an experimental acquaintance with the working of christianity upon worldly hearts, it might be imagined that the violent opposition so generally produced by the preaching of the apostle would be calculated to shake their confidence. This would be the more likely, when they found that the preacher by whom they had been led to receive the gospel themselves had been forced to escape in a concealed manner from place to place. Though in the present day it rarely happens that this difficulty occurs so distinctly and prominently as in the case of the apostle in Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens, yet the ordinary results to those who lift up the standard of spiritual truth with faithfulness and zeal are such, as may be calculated to surprise and disappoint persons who have not yet acquired an experimental knowledge of that truth so powerfully stated by our Lord when he said, "I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John xvii. 14.) Many are the hearers of the word who receive the seed as in stony places, with joy at first, but by and by, when tribulation or persecution ariseth, they are offended. (Matt. xiii. 20, 21.) The preachers of the gospel may well be anxious when

such a sifting of their flocks is in progress, as must therefore be produced by those painful occurrences that shew the hatred or contempt the worldly heart will always feel in some degree or other for the principles and the persons belonging to the gospel of Jesus Christ. St. Paul referred his converts to the forewarning instructions he had given them upon this very point; and every well informed christian ought to anticipate such a course of trial for himself and for others, however little experience he may have obtained respecting the perpetual application of the scriptural assurance that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. iii. 12.) As the danger to be watched is great, and of constant recurrence, so also is the joy great which is afforded when steadiness and stability of faith are manifested in the midst of trying opposition; and we find the distress brought on by the gospel profession become the means of assuring us more firmly of the spiritual safety of those whom we love; or when we are able to afford to others the same comfort by a similar manifestation of the soundness of our own faith. (iii. 2—9.)

QUESTIONS.

In what proportion am I careful for the spiritual benefit of those I love, in comparison with my care for their present and temporal advantage and enjoyment? When I am in their company, what is the principal object of our intercourse?

In looking forward to the enjoyment of the eternal state, what hope have I in connection with the salvation of those whom I endeavour to bring to a saving knowledge of the gospel? How far does the thought of a crown of rejoicing help to characterize my intercourse, and support my affectionate interest in them?

What knowledge have I of Satan's devices? and what means do I take to prevent their success with those whom I love?

What expectations do I form of the results likely to follow amongst worldly persons from a decided profession of spiritual religion by any one from amongst them? Am I prepared to find painful opposition and unkindness? What effect has been produced by such results upon myself?

THE PRAYER.

O merciful God who permittest thy people to enjoy the mutual comfort of each others present society, in order that they may be helpers of each others faith in preparation for the future and eternal union in Christ, give me grace so to profit by such opportunities of christian intercourse as thy Providence may afford me, that I may both be the means of imparting some spiritual gift, and also be a partaker of the same benefit; that my future rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming may be increased in glory, according to the gracious measure of thy mercy in assuring the crown of rejoicing to those whom thou condescendest to employ in this present state. Let not the evil enemy have power to hinder thy servants from fulfilling the work thou appointest for them; but by the ordering of thy providence, provide thine own means of disappointing Satan's designs in tempting the weak and the inexperienced. I pray for this more especially on behalf of those whom I hold in my heart with more affectionate interest: grant that they may not be moved from the hope of the gospel by any tribulation that may result to thy faithful servants for the truth's sake; but give them grace rather to be stablished, strengthened, and settled thereby, to the joy of those who love them, and to the glory of the name of Jesus Christ our only Saviour. AMEN.

THIRD PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 THESSALONIANS IV. 1—12.

INDEX WORDS.		
Exhortation to increase	IV.	FURTHERMORE then we beseech [or, *request*] you, brethren, and exhort [or, *beseech*] *you* by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, *so* ye would abound more and more.
(the ground—holy obedience)	2	FOR ye know what commandments we gave you
	3	by the Lord Jesus. FOR this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification,
in purity.	4	THAT ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his
	5	vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:
in honesty.	6	THAT no *man* go beyond and defraud [or, *oppress*, or *overreach*] his brother in *any* matter [or, *in the matter*]: BECAUSE THAT the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we have forewarned you and testified.
(*the authority*)	7	FOR God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but
	8	unto holiness. HE THEREFORE that despiseth [or, *rejecteth*], despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.
in love.	9	BUT as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you:
	10	FOR ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: BUT we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;
in quiet diligence.	11	AND THAT ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;
	12	that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and *that* ye may have lack of nothing [or, *of no man*].

EXPLANATION.

The prayer of the apostle in the last portion (iii. 12, 13), seems to have suggested at once to his mind, the necessity for urging the Thessalonian christians to

strive after the attainment of that for which he prayed on their behalf. He proceeded to turn his supplication into the language of exhortation. It remained then (as the English expression "furthermore" might rather have stood) that Paul should enjoin them to do, what he had just entreated the Lord to enable them to do. He had asked God to make them "to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men;" and he now urged his christian brethren to go on from grace to grace, abounding more and more in the exercise of those duties which resulted from the second great commandment, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He had himself explained, to the church at Thessalonica, the manner in which they ought to conduct themselves in this respect so as to please God; and he now exhorted them to be more earnest in fulfilling his instructions.

Paul reminded them of the original ground of these instructions, and the commandments which he had conveyed on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and to which God would require their obedience. For instance it was God's will, that in carrying out the law of love to our neighbour, a christian should live in purity and chastity, avoiding altogether every carnal sin. Each christian should maintain such a command over his own body, as would enable him to preserve it from every unholy or degrading use. In this respect he should shew a marked contrast from the heathens, who, not being acquainted with the character and requirement of the pure God, habitually indulged the most debasing sensual desires. As another instance of what God required in obeying the law of love, Paul reminded them also that every christian must be just and honest in all his dealings with his fellowmen, not defrauding nor overreaching any person, whatever business he might have to transact. The apostle bids the Thessalonians remember, that he had distinctly explained to them, that in every case of injury thus inflicted, the Lord himself would undertake the avenging of the evil done. (Rom. xii. 19. Heb. x. 30.)

The two instances of the obedience required to the commandments of God which Paul thus specifies result from the fact, that when God calls his people to spiritual

life, and from the world's ways, he does not call them to the practice of anything foul or unseemly, but to the exercise of all holy living; and as it is by the Divine commandment that this course is required, whoever sets lightly by those rules of living, and neglects them, does not simply disregard the injunctions of the man who communicates them, but casts contempt upon the authority of God himself, not only as the lawgiver, but also as He who bestows the gift of the Holy Spirit to enable the christian to resist those "fleshly lusts that war against the soul."

However, as regards the general exercise of love to their fellow-christians, the apostle felt (he said) that it was not necessary for him to write to the Thessalonian church, since they had received the Divine teaching by which they were led to love one another. And they had evidently applied the teaching in their conduct, not only as regarded the members of their own community in Thessalonica, but towards all the christians in the whole province of Macedonia. But though it might not be needful to repeat the original instructions on this important subject, yet he earnestly exhorted them to be continually enlarged in their love. One other point however he would remind them of. He urged them to be much upon their guard against the restless, unsettled habit of mind so common with their countrymen; and to strive much to live in a calm quiet discharge of their personal duties, minding their own affairs, and not meddling with those of others. And with reference to this, he referred to the commands he had given them to be diligent in all the occupations which their station in life called them to; not being idle and dependent on others, but labouring themselves, that the heathen amongst whom they lived might have no cause of reproach or complaint against any christian, whether as a debtor, or as a beggar; and that they might live on their own earnings, without standing in need of assistance from any man.

APPLICATION.

16. A very important lesson may be learned from the manner in which the mind of the Apostle connected prayer with practice; and proceeded, as if of course, to turn the

supplications he had addressed to God into an earnest exhortation addressed to those on whose behalf he had prayed. Having asked of God that the Thessalonians might "increase and abound in love," that so He might "stablish their hearts unblameable in holiness" at the Lord's coming, he immediately implores them to go on increasing and abounding in the course of conduct which he had shewn them to be according to the will of God, and required by His command. We should learn from hence, that the same Spirit which teaches us to ask teaches us also to act; and the principle applies equally to the effect of supplications for ourselves, as to intercessory prayer. The injunction to "pray one for another" (James v. 16) leads us forward to act upon that other injunction, "exhort one another daily" (Heb. iii. 13); and the affectionate interest which induces us to desire the good gifts of God for some individual friend should produce earnest efforts to advance, in such a one, the holy influences we have asked for them. So also in our personal prayers, when we have striven before the throne of grace to urge our supplications for more of the Holy Spirit in His various gifts, the effect of such prayerfulness should be the diligent endeavour to exercise the grace for which we have asked, with a confident conviction that, in the effort to act, God will enable us to manifest that he has answered our prayers.

17. The truth that God has called us to holiness involves the departure from every thing that is the reverse of holy, by all those who profess that they are called of God to the high privilege of being partakers of the glory of the Lord Jesus. It is the will of God that His children should be holy and pure. His will was declared in the commandments, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." "Thou shalt not steal, &c." The great atonement made for disobedience of these commandments, and the vast sacrifice that such an atonement required—even the gift of the Son of God to be a man, and the yielding of his soul to death —these only manifest more plainly the hateful nature of sin, and how impossible it is that the pure God should tolerate the indulgence of any iniquity. To give way

therefore to impurity or dishonesty is not merely to offend against a system of moral propriety, arranged by men for the purposes of society, but it is to despise the direct commandment of the God of holiness. To imagine that He can tolerate such things, is to be ignorant of His character, and the holy calling of a christian; and it is at the same time to lay aside the thought of the special jurisdiction of the Almighty One, who is pledged to be "the Avenger of all such" offences.

18. Amongst the tokens of increase in grace and holiness, the Apostle introduces a quiet attention to the particular duties of that state of life unto which it pleases God to call each of us. He bids a christian study to attain to this quiet diligence; the more so as it will enable him to live independantly of those who are unable to appreciate the claims of christian brotherhood, and who expect the professors of such a religion as that of the Lord Jesus Christ to do and to bear much more than worldly men. To walk honestly towards the men of the world, and to give them no occasion of reproaching the doctrine of the gospel, are objects of so great importance, that, even if circumstances should render it necessary for a christian to engage in the most laborious offices, it would be better "to work with his own hands," than to cast such a stumbling-block before the unconverted and the irreligious. Diligence in labour however brings the blessing of God, which is commonly manifested by the gift of a contented spirit, and a sufficiency of all things needful; so that christians acting upon this principle, find that they "have lack of nothing."

19. It will be important to observe that, in this first letter of the apostle to any of the churches he had been the instrument of planting, he distinctly asserts that he is acting under the divine inspiration; and that he had done so in his original instructions to the people who were converted by that teaching. He had given commandment "by the Lord Jesus," and in doing this he stated "the will of God," and whoever despised, "despised not man, but God." There is abundant evidence of this, internal and external,

respecting all the apostolic writings; and it is only suggested here as an occasion for thanksgiving, that God has been pleased to leave to his church a Divine instruction communicated through his servants.

QUESTIONS.

What is the practical result of prayer in me? Do I so leave in God's hands the subject I have been praying about as to wait, and wish, without making any effort to obtain what I ask for? or, do my prayers excite me to diligence in striving to effect what I have stated to God that I desire?

What tendency is there in me to departure from purity? or from honesty? What evidences of that tendency does my conduct manifest? what guard do I set over myself in these particulars?

In what am I beholden to persons who are not under religious influence? How can I walk honestly towards all such? Am I chargeable with any interference in other men's matters? Am I quiet and diligent in the conduct of my own?

THE PRAYER.

Thou gracious God, who hearest prayer, have compassion upon me, and impart to me an assured confidence in thy willingness to answer my prayers, and to grant my petitions for Christ's sake; that I may be ready to do all that in me lies for the obtaining of what I have asked, and the manifestation of thy merciful answer. Keep me pure I implore thee from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,—from all unclean desires and unholy wishes; that I may never give way to carnal sins, nor permit myself to wrong any person in the least particular. Be thou my guard and defender from the devices of the evil enemy, and from the corruptions of my natural heart in these respects. And while by thy grace I seek first thy kingdom and righteousness, do thou mercifully add to me all needful things according to thy promise; that I may walk honestly toward them that are without, and have lack of nothing; but, being blessed with food and raiment, may be therewith content, trusting in thine all-sufficient mercy and bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. AMEN.

FOURTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 THESSALONIANS IV. 13—18; V. 1—11.

INDEX WORDS.	
As to deceased christians.	13 BUT I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.
Their re-appearance with Jesus.	14 FOR if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.
the quick.	15 FOR this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.
the dead.	16 FOR the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
together.	17 THEN we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
Application.	18 WHEREFORE comfort [or, *exhort*] one another with these words.
As to the seasons.	V. BUT of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have 2 no need that I write unto you. FOR yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.
One class—*they.*	3 FOR when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.
Another class—*ye.*	4 BUT ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that 5 day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day:
Practical application.	6 we are not of the night, nor of darkness. THEREFORE let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober.
they.	7 FOR they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night.
us.	8 BUT let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an

9 helmet, the hope of salvation. FOR God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by
10 our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
11 WHEREFORE comfort [or, *exhort*] yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

EXPLANATION.

The apostle had prayed that the Lord would make the Thessalonian christians "to increase and abound in love," to the end that their hearts might be established unblameable in holiness before God "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." (iii. 11-13.) We have seen that he immediately proceeded to turn these desires into an exhortation that they would act according to the petition of his prayer to God; and that in doing so, he referred to several details of holy living. (iv. 1—12.) Then having practically applied his prayerful thoughts with respect to holiness as the fruit of increased love, the occasion upon which he had stated that all the fruits of love would be especially manifested seems to have arisen to his mind. He had pointed to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints, as the great object in view; and he now proceeds to explain some further particulars of that important crisis, naturally connecting it with the thought of those towards whom we feel that love which was the main subject of his prayer and exhortation. These particulars appear to have formed a part of those instructions he had said he was so desirous of giving them, in order to "perfect that which was lacking in their faith." (iii. 10.)

Accordingly he tells the brethren in Thessalonica, that he was anxious they should not remain in ignorance, with reference to the future condition of their christian friends who were deceased; in order that they might not give way to that kind of sorrow, which heathens expressed by so many lamentations upon the death of their friends. The heathen knew nothing of the future resurrection, and therefore had no reasonable hope or expectation of meeting again with those whom they had loved in this life. The expression "them which are

asleep," employed here and elsewhere in speaking of the death of christians, seems to have reference to this contrast. Those who are said to be asleep may be expected to awake at some time or other; but the heathen had no reason to hope for such a result, when their friends were taken from them by death.

Paul goes on to explain the subject of which he would not have them ignorant. He had taught them to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ had died, and afterwards had risen again from the grave. Now as they had received this truth, so also they might be assured that when the Lord Jesus Christ shall return again to the earth, God will bring with him those who, having been united to him by the spiritual birth, had departed this life in that state of union with him. These are said to "sleep in Jesus."

As the apostle declared that God would bring such persons *with* Jesus, he proceeds to give a circumstantial detail of some of the particulars connected with the gathering of these, some of whom the christians of Thessalonica had consigned to the grave. He assures them by the word of the Lord, (which he specially states, being about to make the revelation of circumstances not before explained) that the manner in which they would be taken *to* Jesus, in order that they might come *with* him, will be thus. Those who at the coming of the Lord shall not have died, but will be remaining alive—the quick—these will not anticipate the resurrection of those who shall have died; but the Lord Jesus shall, first of all, approach the earth from the highest heaven, whither he is now gone, and where he is said to sit on the right hand of God. (Acts i. 10, 11. Mark xvi. 19.) His descent towards the earth will be announced by a loud shout, and by "the voice of the archangel," as well as that heart-stirring sound which is called "the trump of God." At this time those who have died in the Lord Jesus—united to him by the Holy Ghost—will rise out of their graves. This will happen before any change takes places on those spiritual christians who will be still remaining in the body; but as soon as the dead in Christ shall thus have risen, the quick shall be carried up, encircled by clouds, together with

them, in order to meet the Lord Jesus in the air, to which region he will have descended from the highest heaven, and whither he will call up his people, both the quick and the dead, before he finally comes down to the earth itself. This the apostle declared would be the manner in which Jesus would gather his people, in order to bring them with him; and once being so gathered, he tells us they will ever be with him. Having thus explained to them the reasons why they were not to grieve at the death of christian friends, as the heathen grieved for heathens who died, he bids them comfort and console one another by this information, which he had given them from the Lord himself.

It was not necessary that he should enter into that part of the subject which relates to "the times and the seasons" in which these great events might be expected to occur, for the Thessalonian christians were already well informed upon the main point connected with those particulars. They knew that the day of the Lord's glory would come upon the world, in the same manner as a robber comes to rob a house at night. As the inhabitants of the house, without any suspicion of the danger, would think themselves in quiet security; so the people of the world at that time will be saying peace, and will think themselves in safety; but then the destruction, with which the Lord shall destroy his enemies, shall come upon such people suddenly, and without leaving them the possibility of an escape; in the same way that a woman is seized with the pangs of childbirth, which must take their course to the natural result. The people of the world will be as in a state of darkness; not so the christians; they cannot be compared to the unconscious inhabitants of a house to which the robber comes at night. The day of the Lord's return to the earth will not, like the thief, creep unannounced upon them. Being born again of the Spirit, who is light, they may be called the children of light, and the children of the day, as contrasted with those whose ignorance and dulness of heart class them as belonging to the night, and as abiding in darkness. And if this be the case, it necessarily follows that christians must not act as the other class would act—not lose the remembrance and the

realizing sense of these things, as those who are of the night would give themselves to sleep; but on the contrary, being of the day, and stirred up by a knowledge of what is coming, they ought to be watchful, vigilant, sober. The drowsy take the night for their time of sleep; and those who love to add drunkenness to thirst, choose the night for their intemperance, indulgences, and intoxication. Christians must manifest themselves as belonging to the day, by manifest temperance and sobriety; arming themselves against the dangerous attacks that may be made upon them. As a soldier would defend the more vital parts of his body with a breastplate and a helmet, so the watchful christian must employ a firm faith and an ardent love as the defence of his heart, and the sure hope of the complete salvation to be brought to him by the Lord as a covering for his head. Such a hope will not be a vain one, leading to disappointment; for God has not determined that his people should be exposed to his wrath; but he has, on the contrary, determined that they shall be made partakers of the salvation which has been wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered even unto death, that his atonement might be applied to his people; so that whether an individual happen to be of the number of those who are kept in a state of watchfulness till the time when the Lord shall come, or of those whose spirits are separated from their bodies before he come, every true christian may be assured that he shall live, together with the Lord Jesus at his glorious appearing. On this account the apostle exhorted the christians to comfort each other, and to build one another up in watchfulness and joyful expectation, as indeed he knew that they were habitually doing.

APPLICATION.

20. The manner in which this most important revelation is introduced by the apostle leaves no room to doubt, that those who have loved each other in this life, and have departed in the faith and fear of Christ's holy name, will meet again at the glorious consummation here described, and recognize each other amongst the multitudes with whom they shall then be associated. The fact of recog-

nition, which some persons have been inclined to doubt because it is not directly expressed, may be so surely gathered from the present passage, that none need give way to the anxiety naturally resulting from grief, when we have been separated from the objects of our personal affections. The heathen are said to have no hope, because they have no knowledge of the resurrection; but the object for the exercise of the hope here spoken of is not their own individual restoration to life, but the gratification of meeting once again with those whose presence was a joy to them; and who, having died, have left their bodies only on the earth mouldering into dust. The special object of *this* hope would not be attained merely by a general resurrection of individuals, however supremely delightful might be their happiness in other respects, if the friends whose affection afforded joy in this life were not recognized as such in the midst of that happiness; for the sorrow from which christians are to be preserved by this doctrine does not result from alarm lest their friends should be lost, since the comfort is limited to the cases of those who have already given testimony that they are in Jesus, and who continued to do so even to the end of their lives; but it is the grief for the personal loss in the separation by death, (such as a heathen heart also could feel), which is to be mitigated and removed, by the assured expectation of the personal recognition in the great meeting, at the coming of the Lord.

21. This comfort is thus assured only with reference to those who "sleep in Jesus;"—with respect to all others, the heart is left to a sorrow, like unto them who "have no hope." The necessary effect of this truth must be calculated to engage the whole force of our affection for those dear ones to whom we are bound on earth, on the side of spiritual holiness, both as regards ourselves, and also as regards our influence with our friends. In order that our affectionate intercourse with those whom we love should continue in eternity, it must be sanctified to the service of the Lord Jesus while we live in this world;—to die without Christ is to leave a legacy of despairing sorrow to those who love us—[illegible]llow those whom we love to go on even

unto death without striving to bring them to Christ is to prepare for ourselves the agony of such a sorrow, whenever they may be taken from us. And yet it too often happens, that the very tenderness of affection towards some individual checks the expression of our fears concerning their state of heart towards God in Christ, and stands in the way of our using that influence which seems to be one of the great means by which the Lord is pleased to work, in bringing some from darkness to light—employing the feeling towards a dear relative, as the instrument by which a heart that has not yet been touched by the love of Jesus may be drawn to Him, through the love of a friend who has. It is a great infirmity of the natural heart to act inconsistently in this respect, by putting off the exercise of such influence until the delay destroys the power, by exciting in the unconverted one the feeling, that the christian professor does not consider it necessary or important to urge his principles upon others, since he makes no effort to produce the effect where, if he judged it to be essential, he would be most likely to be interested in the result.

22. The importance of this kind of influence becomes the more evident, from the earnest exhortations with which the apostle urges the necessity of watchfulness on the part of all who are looking forward to the glorious consummation, and from the manner in which he classifies the two descriptions of persons to whom he refers. Those who are ever to be with the Lord, and at his coming are again to enjoy a meeting with their christian friends, must not be overtaken by surprize at the day of his coming. As children of the light they are to be on the watch, sober, selfdenying—in an attitude of defence from the enemies who would seek to deprive them of the expected glory;—not looking for the safe and quiet enjoyment of this world in its present condition, but anticipating the "restitution of all things," and preparing to partake of "the inheritance of the saints in light." (Acts iii. 20, 21. Col. i. 12.) This state of watchfulness is represented as the sure characteristic of those who shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; while on the contrary, those who have no such promise, and therefore have no reasonable ground of

hope, either of being with the Lord, or of meeting their deceased friends, are described as being entirely unconscious of the great crisis to which all things are tending, and uninfluenced by its solemn anticipations. They will think there is peace and safety in the world even to the last;—they will indulge themselves as men who commonly devote to enjoyment and intemperance the hours of darkness at the closing of the necessary labors of the day;—they will be wholly unprepared for defence against the dreadful judgments which will come on them with suddenness and with certainty. How unspeakably important to have decided testimony, that both ourselves, and those whom we love, are amongst those who are watching, and not amongst those who are either sleeping, or indulging themselves in careless security!

21. If the testimony of watchfulness and spiritual union with Christ be satisfactory, the glorious result may be anticipated with the most confident assurance. As regards the purpose of God, it is fixed and settled—"he hath not appointed us to wrath"—it is on the contrary, his own special appointment that his true people should "obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." This was one object of the great atonement, and it shall not fail of accomplishment. The different circumstances of those who die in the Lord, and those who shall be found alive when the Lord shall come, are minor matters, which will not interfere with the certainty of the eternal life in and with Jesus, which will be the lot of each true christian. Hence the great value of the manifest marks of "a child of light and of the day," as contrasted with a child "of night and of darkness;" since by casting a christian upon the promise and purpose of God as regards His children, they afford ground for that confident assurance which the apostle here authorizes true christians to hold. And when the outward witness of our watchfulness and course of sober expectation agrees with the Spirit in bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, then the settled conviction of God's appointment for His children gives a vast courage and power, in maintaining the continual struggle against those great hindrances

to the glorious consummation, the world, the flesh, and the devil; and it becomes one of the instrumental means by which we are made "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

24. In connexion with such assurance, flowing from that double testimony, it will be found, that the striking detail of circumstances here revealed produces a very important effect in weaning our hearts from worldly attractions, and fixing our affections upon the heavenly state, for which Christ's people ought to be preparing. Every particular in this inspired information is calculated to draw our thoughts, desires, and affections, towards the things above. The sight of the "same Jesus who was taken up from us into heaven"—the changing of "our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil. iii. 21) —the certainty that those friends, in intercourse with whom on earth we have taken sweet counsel, and learned the more earnestly to love Jesus, will then appear with us, and enhance our enjoyment of the sight of the Saviour, by again enjoying that higher gratification with us—the definedness of all this, brought within the grasp of our minds and the reach of our human feelings—such a combination of details so greatly elevates the heart and mind of those who contemplate the circumstances in simple faith, that it tends to debase all the worldly matters that call the thoughts and feelings to earth, making them lie so far below the exalted objects of our reasonable and assured hope, that we can the more easily walk amongst them without being drawn away from our heavenly anticipations. Thus the cultivation of the particular knowledge of the Lord's purposes for his people, in such detail as he has been pleased to reveal, becomes one of the most practical portions of a christian's enjoyment in searching the scriptures.

23. With such a prospect before us, it seems but natural to desire to ascertain the time when we may expect to realize its happiness. This natural desire ensnared the Thessalonian church into a misapprehension of the apostle's meaning in this passage of his letter to

them, and he was obliged to write another letter to correct their mistake. (We shall be better able to attempt the application of this point when considering that letter: 2 Thess. ii.) Without referring to that difficulty however, we may apply what is contained in the present portion, to assist us in regulating that natural desire. It is enough that we know one important feature in the signs of that glorious appearing of the Lord upon earth again, since that feature promotes the characteristic watchfulness which will mark the conduct of his waiting people, at all times, and in all generations, until He comes. "As a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (Luke xxi. 35.) Tokens will be given indeed, but they will be such as can only be interpreted by means of an intelligent and spiritual comprehension of the "sure word of prophecy," which St. Peter tells us is "a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn" (2 Pet. i. 19); and of this the self-indulgent careless world will have made themselves incapable. The distinction thus existing between the two classes of people on the earth produces the effect by which, being sudden and secret to one class, it will nevertheless be expected and anticipated by the other; who, comparing the signs of the times with the prophetic statements, will be lifting up their heads with joyful hope, while the other class will find their "hearts failing them for fear," when at last the tokens shall speak for themselves. With this degree of knowledge of the approaching event christians must be satisfied, while it leads each generation to apply the exhortation to be watchful. The precise day and hour has been hid from all men; and whatever indication of dates may be found in the Scriptures, they are so obscured by difficulties of one kind or another, as to make it impossible to determine any fixed time as that distinctly announced by the word of God. (Mark xiii. 32-37. Acts i. 7.) Probably this was intentionally arranged in the manner of making the Divine revelation; and we perceive from the present portion, that though Paul was favoured with extraordinary information of the Divine will (2 Cor. xii. 1—10), yet he was allowed to remain without a distinct knowledge of the appointed period of time at which the Lord will return

in glory; and that though he was permitted to reveal the character of several events which are previously to occur (2 Thess. ii.), yet his personal conception of these events was such, as made it to his mind a possible case, that he himself might be one amongst the surviving christians who would be "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord."

QUESTIONS.

With what kind of grief do I sorrow for any christian friend whom I may have lost by death? Do I look forward with certainty to a recognition when we meet on the day of the Lord's coming?

How is my influence with my friends employed for their spiritual benefit? Is there any one whom I love, to whom I do not feel that I am able to speak plainly on this point? What should I be likely to feel should such a one die suddenly?

In what degree am I distinctly watching over my own conduct with reference to the state in which I ought to be at the Lord's coming? How far am I plainly different from those who forget the great crisis in the enjoyment and occupations of the present world?

Have I a confident assurance that I shall obtain salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming in glory? If not, why have I not such assurance? What testimony have I that I am a true christian? If I think I am a true christian, why do I suppose God's purpose towards me will fail?

Have I shrunk from considering the detail of the events which are to take place at the Lord's coming? If so, why have I done this? For what purpose has God revealed any particulars? How shall I account for neglecting any such particulars as He may have been pleased to reveal?

What are my feelings with reference to the time at which the Lord will appear from heaven? Are they such as lead me to lay aside the subject altogether? Are they such as lead me to a confident expectation that he will come at a period fixed in my own mind? Do I feel that the suddenness which will mark the event ought to make me anxious to be prepared for it, in case it might happen in my own lifetime?

THE PRAYER.

O merciful God, who wouldest not that thy people should sorrow, as those who have no hope, for them that sleep in Jesus, I praise thy name that thou hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of thy Son, our Lord. Grant me grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may together come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for all them that unfeignedly love thee. Teach me so to let my light shine before men, that they may be led the more to glorify thee by making their calling and election sure. Let the glory that is to be revealed so fill me with joy unspeakable and full of glory, that I may diligently study all that thou hast been pleased to explain of the exceeding happiness of the inheritance of the saints in light; in order that my affections may be more set upon things above, not on things on the earth; and that I may be more watchful for the signs of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and more evidently distinguished from those who are of the night and of darkness. Give me the spirit of patience, that while in watchfulness I look for and haste unto the coming of that great day, I may cheerfully submit to whatever delay thou mayest see fit to make; willing to be found either amongst those who are found alive, or those who shall have died, as it may seem good to thee to appoint. Yet, gracious Lord, do thou mercifully condescend speedily to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom; that I, together with all those that have departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have the perfect consummation of the promised bliss for eternal ages. AMEN.

FIFTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 THESSALONIANS V. 12—28.

INDEX WORDS.	
Exhortations *respecting* pastors.	12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and 13 admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves.
to pastors	14 Now we exhort [or, *beseech*] you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, [or, *disorderly*], comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*.
to all	15 See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all *men*.
as to thankful prayer	16-18 Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: FOR this is the will of God 19 in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit.
as to testing instruction	20,21 Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold 22 fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil.
Paul's prayer.	23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
	24 Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do *it*.
Closing requests.	25 Brethren, pray for us.
	26, 27 Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss. I charge [or, *adjure*] you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.
	28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

EXPLANATION.

The apostle was now about to close his letter; and before doing so, he directed the minds of the Thessalonian christians to several important points of practice, concerning which he gave them earnest and affectionate exhortations. He first urged them to consider and acknowledge the responsible position of those who discharged the ministerial

office amongst them. It is more than probable that Paul had himself selected these ministers, and had ordained elders for the church in Thessalonica, as he had before done in every church planted during the first missionary journey, in which he and Barnabas were engaged. (Acts xiv. 23.) He speaks of them here as labouring among the Thessalonians, like those to whom he afterwards referred in writing to the Hebrews, as "watching for their souls as they that must give account." (Heb. xiii. 17.) They are placed over their fellow-christians in the work of the Lord, and by his authority, in order to give such exhortations of warning as might be necessary to keep them walking in the right way. On account of this work—its heavenly character—its high sanction—its holy influence, christians were charged to hold them in honour, and to love them with enlarged affection. In the exercise of this abundant love towards their spiritual pastors, he exhorted them to live in perfect harmony together.

Paul then addressed the ministers themselves, exhorting them to be diligent in those duties which gave them the claim to that abundant love from their people. He had before especially charged the Thessalonians to study to be quiet, and to be attentive to their own concerns in an orderly manner; and he now exhorts the ministers to give due warning to those who were insubordinate, and neglected their own proper business by interfering with matters that did not belong to them. In the trials to which the church was exposed, some might be timid and wavering—faint-hearted and ready to sink under the fear of the calamities which their faith might bring upon them; such should be addressed with encouraging words of comfort, while a sustaining arm should be extended to uphold those who are weak. In dealing with these various characters, and with all others, the pastors were charged to exercise an unwearied patience.

After this direct exhortation to the elders at Thessalonica, Paul enlarged his address so as to include all the members of the church; and he bid them take care to act always upon the Lord's command, not to resist evil. (Matt. v. 38—48.) Whatever evil might be dealt to them by any person, a christian must not return evil for it; but he must

continually aim at doing good, and shewing kindness as well to those who do not profess to belong to Christ, as to his fellow christians.

Then follow some short exhortations on essential points of christian experience. The joyful state of mind that results from a firm faith in Christ is set forth by the injunction, to be at all times rejoicing. The constant communion of our spirit with God is expressed by the charge to be unceasingly in such a state of mind as to hold prayerful intercourse with God, under a realizing sense of his presence. Whatever may be the circumstances in which a christian is placed, he is enjoined to give vent to the abiding joy of his heart, in thanksgiving; feeling assured that it is the will of God in the Lord Jesus, that all things should work together for good to them that love Him. And since such a blessed frame of mind is produced by the Holy Spirit, we are warned not to do anything which may damp or put out his holy influences.

As the means of maintaining within us the fire of the Holy Spirit, which produces that rejoicing, prayerful, thankful state of heart just stated, the apostle exhorts christians not to consider lightly the preaching and expounding of the scriptures, by those who, because they open the will of God to the people, are called prophets. These instructions must not be undervalued or neglected; though a sound judgment should be exercised in attending to them. "Beware of false prophets" was our Lord's own warning (Matt. vii. 15); and Paul bids the Thessalonians try and test all the prophesyings; and after proving them, to lay hold upon and retain that portion, which, in the sifting, turns out to be right; and on the other hand, to avoid and keep from every thing that seems to be wrong.

The apostle now closes his letter with an earnest prayer —an additional testimony to that which he had already given (iii. 11—13) of the reality of his prayerful remembrance of them, which he mentioned in the opening of his epistle (i. 2.) He supplicated the very God, who is the bestower of that peace to which he had been exhorting them, to purify them perfectly as a peculiar people; so that in mind, in affections, and in bodily acts they might be kept without blame to the end, even to the glorious

manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ at his return to the earth. He who had called them to the knowledge of the gospel, and into the power of its truth, is faithful—one who "cannot deny himself;" he has given great and precious promises, and he will be true in carrying on to completion that which he has begun.

To this prayer for the Thessalonians, Paul adds an earnest request that they would also pray for him. Then having expressed his affection by sending a holy kiss of charity to every member of the church, he solemnly enjoins the public reading of his letter to all of them; and winds up with the apostolic blessing, desiring that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ might be with them.

APPLICATION.

26. The reciprocal duties of the pastor and the flock are placed before us in the beginning of this portion; we are taught what respect and love ought to be manifested by the people towards those whose special work amongst them is to promote peace, and by admonition to restrain those selfish feelings which divide men each to follow their own personal interests. The cultivation of this love for the pastor would induce christians to concur in his faithful warnings to the unruly and disorderly—to assist him in giving comfort and encouragement to the timid and feeble-minded—to combine with him in supporting the weak—and to manifest a patient endurance of those trials, which enable us by following his example to strengthen his hands in his work. To this must be added the habitual exercise of earnest prayer for the minister whom God places over us. The apostle, by asking for such prayer on his own behalf, shewed how great must be the need of this pleading for the spiritual necessities of all pastors, since the inspired servant of God required it of those to whom he was sent. (v. 12—14, 25.)

27. The cheerful happy character, which ought to belong to the faith of a christian, is to be manifested at all times, and under all circumstances; the constant endeavour to follow that which is good in every relation of society, tends to promote this, both by the cultivation of a loving

spirit within, and by conciliating the goodwill of those around us. And even if events of the most untoward and distressing kind should tend to excite most painful natural feelings, yet the conviction, that the overruling wisdom of the Almighty, combining with the tender sympathy of His Divine Son manifest in the flesh, makes all things work together for good to them that love God, counteracts the natural effect of such circumstances, and enables a true christian to "rejoice evermore," even in the midst of trials the most severe. As "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," so he whom the Lord chasteneth should be drawn the more to love Him, and to give Him thanks for the manifestation of His love, even though it be in the permission or infliction of trouble upon us. He who rules in every thing has promised, that all things shall work for the good of his children; and therefore they are bound "in every thing to give thanks." But as these promises can only give such confidence and gratitude to those who "are led by the Spirit of God," and thereby manifest that they "are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14), all must depend upon the continued possession of that Holy Spirit. How important then the warning, that we "quench not the Spirit!" A fire may have been kindled about the heart to burn up the surrounding hindrances of sin, which prevent the inward conscience from working in such power as might concede to the Spirit the throne of the heart; and if, by the love of the world, or the indulgence of the flesh, professing christians so quench this salutary fire, the fact that it was kindled by the Holy One will render such a quenching the most fearful ground of condemnation; as it is said, "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John iii. 19.) And even when the Holy Spirit has lighted his fire within the very heart, and having "begun a good work," has thereby justified the confidence that he "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6), how wholesome is the exhortation that we "quench not the Spirit," in order to quicken all God's people to a more watchful diligence in all good works, that being the more zealous, they may prove themselves to be Christ's peculiar people, purified

unto Himself, even as He redeemed them from all iniquity. (Titus ii. 14.)

28. The injunction not to despise pastoral instruction is connected with the command to "prove all things" in order to hold fast the good, and abstain from every thing that has even an appearance of evil. This exhortation of the apostle not only establishes the right of private judgment, but positively commands each christian to exercise in all religious matters the judgment which God has given him in order that he may so conduct himself as to hold fast the good, and abstain from all appearance of evil. This trying of "the spirits whether they are of God" is to be specially applied to "prophesying"—to the declaration of doctrines—"because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John iv. 1); and it must be diligently exercised by individual christians, each for himself: for if the decision be left to the authority of him who stands in the place of the prophet, the warning could not possibly be any guard against the danger. Hence we see the delusion of that doctrine of the Romish Church, which deprives the people of the right of private judgment in all religious matters; and which places the rule, whereby they are to be guided in receiving all doctrines, under the controul of those very persons, against whose possible treachery or ignorance the command to "prove all things" was intended to act as a protection: the decision is said to belong to the church, but the church (with reference to this matter) is explained to mean only the very persons who stand in the position of prophets. The Berean Jews (who were the immediate neighbours of the Thessalonians), searched the scriptures in order to test the preaching of Paul, and their conversion to the faith of Jesus was the result;—the Thessalonian christians having been settled in that faith, are commanded by the Apostle to "prove all things," in order that they might know what part of the "prophesyings" by which they were taught they were to hold fast; and all christians are hereby exhorted to exercise the best powers of their minds in searching the Scriptures, in order to test the preaching of all those who "labour amongst them in the Lord," lest they should be

ensnared by "false prophets," which from the beginning has been one great danger in the visible church of Christ. (v. 20—22.)

29. The closing prayer of the apostle is supported by the remembrance of the Lord's faithfulness to his word and promise. Paul earnestly desired, that those whom he was addressing might be preserved blameless; and while he prayed that they might be so, and informed them of his prayer in such a manner as that they might be urged to diligence in striving to maintain such a course, he reminded them of the unchangeable truthfulness of God, and the certainty of His supplying them with the strength to perform that which He requires. The extent of the requirement, as gathered from the apostle's prayer, is indeed "exceeding broad" (Psa. cxix. 96): every point is stated with a superlative expression. The whole character, in every department of feeling and action, is included in the "spirit, soul, and body;" and the "whole" of these is required to be kept without blame during the continuance of the present life, even unto the end. The faithfulness of Him, who calls his people to this holy course, is pledged to afford the power, by which they may walk in that way; and in whatsoever they fall short of that standard, they are acting under the influence of that original nature, the infection of which remains even in those that are regenerated, and the blame belongs to them; whilst the glory of redeeming them from all iniquity is His, who "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," and who bestows upon them the spotless wedding-garment, wrought for them by "the Lord our righteousness." (v. 23, 24.)

QUESTIONS.

What are my feelings towards my spiritual Pastor? and what are the motives which prompt those feelings?

In what respects do I further the objects of his ministry amongst my neighbours, directly by active assistance, and indirectly by example?

How earnestly and how frequently do I pray for him?

What is the character of my religious feelings? is it cheerful or gloomy? Is it shewn in habitual thanksgiving

to God? How does it appear in the tone of my prayers? What degree of confidence do I feel in the beneficial result of painful trials?

How do I value the testimony of spiritual life in me? and what care do I take in maintaining it?

What respect do I pay to the religious instructions within my reach? What means do I take to ascertain whether they are according to the truth of God? How far am I influenced by the opinion of men, and the rule established by man's judgment? To what test have I submitted my rules of conduct?

What part of my conduct may have the appearance of evil to some? what part appears evil in the sight of God?

What portion of my whole character do I leave unwatched? Is there any point on which I am not striving to be blameless? To what power do I look, to enable me to succeed in these efforts? How far do I confide in God's faithfulness?

THE PRAYER.

Thou gracious God, who sendest thy servants to be ambassadors, and watchmen, and stewards of thy household; I praise thy name for thy merciful appointment of the ministry of thy word, and I beseech thee to impart the gifts of the Holy Spirit to thy servant who labors amongst the flock, where by thy providence my lot has been cast. Give him wisdom to warn them that are unruly—to comfort the feebleminded—to support the weak—and to be patient toward all men; and enable me by thy grace to be a helper of his work, in such ways as circumstances may permit. Impart to me the joy which flows from the secret of thy presence, and the assurance which results from full confidence in thy faithfulness; so that, whether in ease or in pain, in comfort or in distress, in plenty or in poverty, I may rejoice evermore; and communing at all times with thee, may recognize thy mercy in the manifestation of thy will, and ever give thee thanks. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me, but give me a watchful jealousy over my own heart, lest by permitting myself to grieve Him I might make him depart from me. Let grace be added to grace within me day by day. Give me a spirit of understanding

and of a sound mind, that I may be able to bring all the instructions I receive to the test of thy revealed word; and proving all things, may hold fast that which is good, while I abstain from all appearance of evil, hating even the garment spotted with the flesh. May my whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to this end stablish thy word unto thy servant, O thou faithful God who also wilt do it; that so I may be found to be a partaker of the perfect righteousness of Thy Son our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

A GUIDE TO THE EPISTLES.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

WRITTEN AT CORINTH, A.D. 50.

INTRODUCTION.

To the information given in the introduction to the former Epistle to the Thessalonians, it will only be necessary to add the explanation of the circumstances which led the apostle to write a second letter. In the Guide to the Acts of the Apostles (page 239), it is stated that Paul remained at Corinth a year and a half preaching the gospel. "It was in an early part of this period that he received intelligence from Thessalonica, that some part of his letter had been misunderstood by the christians to whom it was addressed. He immediately wrote a second letter to them, to explain more particularly the portion that had been mistaken: taking advantage also of the opportunity to refer to some other matters, of which he had received intelligence, and which required to be put to rights in the condition of the church at Thessalonica. This letter is that portion of the word of God, which is found in the New Testament as the second epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Thessalonians."

FIRST PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

2 THESSALONIANS I.

INDEX WORDS.		
The salutation.	I.	Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord
	2	Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Thankfulness on their account	3	We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, BECAUSE THAT your faith groweth exceedingly, AND the charity of every one of you all
	4	toward each other aboundeth; SO THAT we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:
a token from God	5	*Which is* a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, THAT YE may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:
against	6	SEEING *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
for	7	AND to you who are troubled rest with us,
when		WHEN the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels [*the angels of*
	8	*his power*] in flaming fire,
how against	8	taking [or, *yielding*] vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of
	9	our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction
		from the presence of the Lord, and from the
	10	glory of his power; when he shall come
how for		to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe
		(BECAUSE our testimony among you was believed)
		in that day.
Consequent prayer its object.	11	WHEREFORE also we pray always for you,
		THAT our God would count [or, *vouchsafe*] you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with
	12	power: THAT the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

EXPLANATION.

Paul begins his second letter to the Thessalonians with a salutation, similar to that with which he had before opened his first. He associates with himself the same two companions, Timothy and Silvanus, or Silas; who, having been with him at Thessalonica, were also with him at the time of his writing this letter from Corinth, and who therefore joined him in the greeting. The letter is addressed to the church of the Thessalonians, the people united by the one Spirit in God our Father, and in Jesus Christ the Lord. To these he sends the same christian greeting as before—he desires that they may be blessed with grace and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. (See page 7.)

The apostle not only repeats the assurance that he always reflected upon the christians at Thessalonica with feelings of gratitude to God, as he had stated in the opening of his former letter (1 Thess. i. 2); but he adds that this gratitude to God had become more due, in consequence of the progress they had made in christian life. In the first place their faith had very considerably increased—their hold upon the truth as it is in Jesus, and confident expectation of the fulfilment of God's promises, was firmer and firmer every day. Hence also in the second place, the love which was the necessary fruit of faith was more abundantly manifested in the exercise of all those kind offices towards each other, in which every one of them seemed to be taking delight. Besides the result of continual gratitude to God in the apostle's heart, this increased blessing excited in him the expression of joyful exultation; to which (as the instrument employed by God in converting the Thessalonians) he gave vent, when speaking amongst christians in other parts of the world, of the patient manner in which their faith had enabled them to conduct themselves while suffering the great afflictions produced by the persecuting spirit of the heathens, from whom they had separated themselves in becoming christians.

The state of things resulting from the indulgence of this spirit of persecution, was one strong proof of the certainty of the future judgment which the Lord will

hereafter execute in righteousness; and in which he will plainly make it appear, that he has permitted the tribulations his people have been called to suffer on account of their faith, in order that, through the fiery trials they endured, they might be proved to be fitting inheritors of the kingdom of God's glory. God is just; and in the exercise of his justice, he will repay tribulation to those who dealt out tribulation to his people; while on the other hand, his people who have endured tribulation shall be released from the trouble they have endured; and, together with the apostles and all the Lord's servants, shall receive abiding rest, which stands in contrast with the violence by which they are now agitated. This contrasted blessing shall be enjoyed in its fulness, at the glorious crisis when the Lord Jesus Christ shall withdraw the veil that hides him now from our sight, and shall appear in his descent from heaven surrounded by the angels, who are the instruments of his power,—the brightness of his glory being like a flaming fire. (Rev. i. 14, 15.) When the Divine Saviour shall thus appear coming from heaven, he shall execute the just judgment of his wrath on those who have rejected the knowledge of the true God, and also on those who have not yielded themselves to be practically obedient to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Both these classes of persons shall then be cast out of the presence of God, into that perdition which can never be reversed—even eternal perdition;—they shall never be partakers of the glory of his power. On the other hand, the holy people who, in their time of suffering on earth, were the objects in whom the name of Jesus was despised and blasphemed—these same saints shall then be the objects in whom the Lord Jesus shall be more especially glorified; and the blessed results of his great atonement, and his gracious dealings with them who have been united with him by faith, shall then excite the wondering admiration of the universe. The Thessalonian christians would be partakers of this glory, through the power of the gospel which Paul had preached to them, and which they had faithfully received and obeyed.

It was because the preaching of Paul had been thus received by the Thessalonians, and had opened to them so

glorious a prospect, that the apostle was so earnest and constant in his prayers on their behalf. He prayed that God would vouchsafe to make them such as might obtain the blessedness to which they were thus called, and that He would complete and carry to perfection all the merciful designs which, in His goodness, He had purposed towards them; working in them, by the power of the Holy Spirit, those fruits of holiness that grow out of a true and effectual faith. The especial object of these prayers was that, the evidence of this power of the gospel in the Thessalonian christians might bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name their light was shining; and that they might in the end attain to the glory in which his people will share at the setting up of his kingdom; and all this according to the gracious favour of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION.

Reference may be made to Applications No. 1, 2, and 3, of the first epistle to the Thessalonians. (See pages 10 and 11.)

1. By comparing the opening of this epistle, with the feeling concerning the Thessalonians expressed by the apostle in his former letter, we can trace an answer to his continued mention of them in his supplications. (1 Thess. i. 2, 3; ii. 13; iii. 9, 10.) We see how a little while after he had occasion to thank God, because their faith had grown, and their love, and their patience. He felt bound to thank God for these benefits, not only for the sake of the Thessalonians, but because, having made special prayer to God in their behalf, it was a duty to express his gratitude for the favour with which his prayer had been received. This is an especial mark in the character of a truly prayerful spirit, that it quickens us to perceive the evidences of God's having heard our prayers; and disposes us to a ready expression of thankfulness for each token of an answer. It is not enough to have a good hope that the work of grace is really begun in those whom we love; the same affection which desired spiritual benefit for them in the beginning, should watch attentively for the increase of faith, hope, and charity, in each. Nothing manifests

this growth more, than patient endurance of the painful consequences resulting from a christian profession; and therefore such an evidence should call forth especial gratitude. We may not only feel this as regards others, but we may take encouragement from a distinct testimony of this kind in ourselves, as proving the mercy of God towards us, and His answer to our prayers:—indeed we hardly ought to be satisfied without some testimony of continued growth in faith and charity, however little it may please God to permit our patience to be tried by such tribulation as that to which the apostle refers. (i. 3, 4.)

2. It is oftentimes a very unequal state of things in this life, through which the people of God are tried and proved for their heavenly inheritance. To the infidel this suggests the false notion that God takes no care for man, and leaves events to chance; but to the christian, enlightened by the scriptures, the suffering of the good and the holy is "a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God." The supreme excellence and holiness of the character of God may be plainly known, "being understood by the things that are made" (Rom. i. 19, 20): since then the holy God permits, in this state of life, those who love and serve him to pass through such a fiery trial, it is quite clear that he will justify his present by his future dealings with them; their troubles shall be crowned by a season of rest, and those who troubled them shall feel that, which they have taken pleasure in inflicting on others. The contrasted effects of the righteous judgment of God should be especially marked: tribulation to those who caused tribulation—what a contrast to the individual who exercised the power of giving pain, when he becomes the subject of pain himself;—the rest that remaineth for the people of God, to those who had no rest because of maintaining the profession of that honoured name—what a contrast to the sufferer for Christ's sake. (i. 5—9.)

3. The object that is continually placed before the christian, as the means of drawing forth his most earnest feelings and of encouraging him in his severest struggles, is the surpassing glory that will accompany the re-appearing

of the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavens on his return to the earth, as he was seen to go. (Acts i. 11.) Of this glory all christians that endure to the end will partake, and the Saviour will be glorified in them;—the wonders of his redeeming love will be shewn forth in them, to the admiration of the hosts of heaven, and of the future inhabitants of the restored earth. "That day" will however be a day of destruction for His enemies, who are described as not knowing God, and not obeying the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is terrible to contemplate the prospect presented to the mind by the manner in which their punishment is expressed. The great distinction laid down between these two classes is, that while the one know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the others manifest their knowledge by their obedience; so that the name of Christ is glorified in them even now, amongst "the world that lieth in wickedness," while they live in anticipation of that bright and blessed appearing in which the same Christ shall be glorified in them visibly. (i. 7—10, 12.)

4. The prayerfulness of the apostle shews itself upon every occasion, and upon each it affords us an example to follow, and suggests an object for our prayers. The prayer of the apostle at the end of this portion, was specially offered for an object, of which, in his former epistle, he had expressed his assurance that it would be attained. He had written to them, "knowing their election of God;" and now he prays that "God would count them worthy of this calling," and fulfil all his good pleasure towards them. It must always be remembered that, whatever God has pledged himself to, for that he will be enquired of. Every promise forms the ground of a petition, made in the assurance of hope; but it must be asked for, in order to turn the promise into a claim. To know "our election of God," is to have the strongest reason for persevering prayer, that we may "be counted worthy of this calling," and for the surest hope that in answer to such prayer God will fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness towards us; and thus it is that the assured heart is kept humble before

God, and constant in its intercourse with Christ by prayer. (i. 11.)

QUESTIONS.

By what marks do I know that my faith has grown, and that I have increased in the spirit of love?

What evidence of patient endurance of wrong has been shewn by my conduct?

What effect is produced in my mind by the frequent view of the sufferings of good men, and the success of bad men? Do I feel the more sure, and look forward the more earnestly to the day of the righteous judgment of God?

How does the glory to be revealed at the coming of the Lord affect me? Does it excite my fervent hopes and expectations?

In what manner can I say that the name of Jesus Christ is glorified in me now? What are my grounds for trusting that He will be glorified in me in the day of his return to the earth?

When I feel sure of God's promises towards me, does this assurance make me more or less prayerful for the things promised?

THE PRAYER.

O Lord, who lovest that thy people should abound in all those graces which thou bestowest on them, make my faith to grow, my love to increase, and my patience of hope to endure continually in the midst of every trial thou seest fit to appoint for me. Thou art just, O God; and righteous are all thy ways: it is of thy loving mercy that thou chastenest thy children. Terrible will be thy judgments upon those, whose evil hearts produce the afflictions thou permittest. Give me grace to see thy wisdom and thy justice in all the mysteries of thy providence; and let them lead me the more earnestly to long for the glory that shall be revealed in the day of thy coming. Grant that the joyful hope of partaking of thy glory in that day, and of then shewing forth the fulness of thy redeeming love, may ever be powerful to influence me in glorifying thee now; that I may walk before the evil world as one taught and led by thy Spirit, so that they may see my

good works, and glorify thee, the giver of every good thing. Give me a continual increase of the spirit of prayer; that knowing the riches of thy grace, and the power of thy calling in my own soul, I may never cease to entreat thee to count me worthy of that calling, and to fulfil all the good pleasure of thy goodness in me, to the glory of the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

SECOND PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

2 THESSALONIANS II.

INDEX WORDS.	
As to the delay of the Lord's coming	II. NOW we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together
	2 unto him, THAT ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.
Previous events	3 LET no man deceive you by any means: FOR *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first,
the man of sin	AND that man of sin be revealed, the son of
	4 perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
	5 Remember ye not, that, when I was with you, I told you these things?
(the impeding power)	6 AND now ye know what withholdeth [or *holdeth*] that he might be revealed in his time.
	7 FOR the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.
his destruction	8 And THEN shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the
his coming	9 brightness of his coming: *even him*, whose
	10 coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with
his followers	all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish;

BECAUSE they received not the love of the truth,
11 that they might be saved. And

their delusion

FOR THIS CAUSE God shall send them strong delusion, THAT they should believe a lie: that they
12 all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The contrast.

13 BUT we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, BECAUSE God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of

called to glory

14 the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Exhortation.

15 THEREFORE, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

Prayer.

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,
17 comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

EXPLANATION.

The Apostle now entered upon the main subject which had called forth this second letter;—he had introduced the subject already, by referring to the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ to manifest the righteous judgment of God, and his glory in the saints. (2 Thess. i. 5—10.) It appears that some persons had excited the christians at Thessalonica, by asserting that the day of the Lord's return to the earth was close at hand, and might be expected immediately. Probably this had been suggested by that part of the former epistle, which had mentioned some of the circumstances of the Lord's coming in detail. This statement had been accompanied by a warning, that the approach of that day would be like the course of the thief in the night, unexpected to those who were not on the watch, but anticipated by those who were forewarned and were looking for their loved Saviour. In consequence it had been imagined by some, that this great crisis (to which the apostle pointed all their hopes and their expectations) was fast approaching; and the authority of the apostle's name was attempted to be given to their mistaken notions. Messages to this effect had been ascribed to him, and either the meaning of his first epistle had been misrepresented, or else (as some have conjectured) a letter had

been forged as having been written by St. Paul, in which this doctrine was plainly set forth.

It was under these circumstances, that the apostle now wrote to exhort the christians at Thessalonica, not to allow such imaginations to excite and distress them. He besought them that, with respect to the return of the Lord to the earth, and the collecting of the saints around him in glory, they would not allow themselves to be easily agitated, nor let their minds be tossed and troubled; even though the announcement of Christ's speedy coming should be made by any who pretend to the gift of prophecy, or should be brought as a message by word of mouth, or even in writing, as from Paul himself. The Thessalonians were not to be deceived on this point, either by these, or any other means whatever. In order to enable them to judge of the delay that might be expected before the Lord's return, and at the same time to acquaint them with some signs that might assist in quickening them to greater watchfulness as the time should really draw near; he proceeded to state some events which must take place before the great crisis of the church's glory. Previous to the Lord's coming, that great departure from the true faith amongst the members of the church, which is called "the apostacy" must have taken place; and further, he who is characterized as "the man of sin," and "the son of perdition" must have come forth, and been manifested. This "man of sin" is described as the one who stands in direct opposition to, and claims to be honoured and exalted above every being who is worshipped and venerated, and this to such a degree, that ruling and presiding in Christ's church—"the temple of God"—he would exhibit himself as being God.

The apostle calls the Thessalonians to record, that during the time of his personal ministry amongst them, he had not omitted to forewarn them of these very things; and they also were aware of the obstruction which stood in the way of the open manifestation of this "man of sin," who however would come forward in his own proper season. For even at the time the apostle was writing, this mysterious evil power was already at work; only the person who hindered its development would continue to

impede it until he should be removed, so that he could hinder it no more. Then it was (the apostle declared) that the wicked lawless one would be openly manifested; who nevertheless will afterwards be wasted by the breath of Christ's mouth, and utterly destroyed by the glorious brightness with which He will shine at his coming. This fearful "man of sin" was to exercise a devilish power, such as would be proved by supernatural tokens and signs, so that wrong will have a deceivableness, by which it will appear to be right. But this will only be amongst the wretched victims of this horrible system;—unhappy persons, who will perish from the presence of the Lord, because when they heard the truth, and even pretended to follow the truth, they did not love the truth, though it might have been for their everlasting salvation. And because they thus withheld their affections from the truth, God will allow the seductive error to have such effectual power over their minds, that they will readily believe the delusive falsehood, by which the unrighteousness is hid under a religious seeming, in order that all those might be justly condemned, whose love of sin made them not love the truth, and therefore reject it.

When Paul described this terrible condition of those who would be thus ruined by the awful apostacy, which he foretold as necessarily preceding our Lord's return to the earth; he contrasted this with the happy assurance regarding the Thessalonian christians, of which he had spoken in his former letter, and which the growth of their faith and charity had so fully confirmed, according to the opening of his present epistle. (1 Thess. i. 4. 2 Thess. i. 3.) He felt it his duty to return continual thanks to God on account of those brethren, the objects of the Lord's love; because God had from the foundation of the world chosen them for the salvation wrought by Christ, and applied it to them through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, and the effectual receiving of the truth to which they were called when the gospel was preached to them; so that in believing it they set forward on the course, by which they would ultimately be partakers of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph. i. 4. Phil. i. 6. John xvii. 22.) As the apostle could speak of them in this con-

trasted position, and entertain this blessed assurance, he urged it as a reason why they should firmly maintain their character; standing firm in the face of every difficulty, and yielding steady obedience to all the instructions they had received from him either in person or in writing. After thus exhorting them, he again gave vent to that spirit of earnest prayer on their behalf, of which he so often speaks. He beseeches that same Lord Jesus Christ, of whose glory they were to be partakers, and that God, whose love and abiding consolation they had experienced, to afford them full comfort, and to keep them stedfast in every sound doctrine, and in every holy practice.

The explanation of this passage cannot be considered as finished, without some attempt to enable the reader to discover to what St. Paul alludes, as something which was beginning to work, even at the time he was writing (1800 years ago), and which was to be more fully developed, and then to work on until its destruction by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. In endeavouring to understand this we possess advantages from knowing the history of the church from that time to this, which may enable us to trace the progress of this "mystery of iniquity." That which is spoken of in our translation as "a falling away," is more pointedly expressed in the original to be "THE apostacy"—the great falling away of a vast number of the professing members of the church, from the essential doctrines of spiritual truth. The character of the doctrines gradually engrafted upon christianity by the ruler of the Romish church, (each one tending more than the last to neutralize the truth upon which it was apparently founded,) is exactly suited to the description here given of *the apostacy*. Essentially evil, the system began in a hidden and mysterious manner; and some early indications of it were to be observed even in the time of St. Paul; while they were more plainly manifested in the later time of St. John. (1 John ii. 18—22; iv. 3. 2 John 7.) The power of this "mystery of iniquity" was administered by an individual, as a head of the system—this was the Bishop of Rome (called also the Pope). Though the profession of christianity was countenanced by the emperor Constantine 263 years

after the date of this letter to the Thessalonians, and was fully established in the Roman empire by the emperor Theodosius 75 years afterwards; yet the Romish ecclesiastical system and doctrines could not obtain the temporal power, nor fully develope itself in all its blasphemous presumption, until the Roman empire was entirely reduced in the western part of the world, when the papal influence took its place. It was the unanimous opinion of the early christians, that the expression "he that now letteth," was intended to refer to the power of the Roman emperor; and that the apostle expressed it in this ambiguous manner from obvious motives of prudence, while living in the reign of the emperor Nero; feeling (as he says) that those to whom he was writing would know what he meant. When however, early in the seventh century, the impeding power of the emperors was taken out of the way, the Pope of Rome established himself in despotic supremacy over the minds and consciences of the western world; while he obtained a high place amongst the sovereigns of the earth in temporal dominion. By assuming the title of "Christ's Vicar upon earth," he laid the foundation of a claim that was satisfied with nothing short of divine honors, which were accorded to the Pope in the darker ages: and the act of adoration performed, even to this day, by the cardinals to a new pope, sitting upon the altar, on the occasion of his elevation to the popedom, too surely proves the continuance of the claim. The papal system was raised to its tremendous despotism over the minds of men, either by the influence of false miracles forged to deceive the people; or else if any really supernatural power has at any time produced the wonderful things of which the legends of Romanism are full, it was the exercise of Satanic influence: so that the Romish miracles have been either "lying wonders," false, and pretending to be what they were not,—or done by the power of devils, and lying wonders, because they testified to false doctrines. The doctrines thus sanctioned have always been such as produce unrighteousness, while they appear under the character of a righteous religion; thus suiting well with the expression "all deceivableness of unrighteousness." Hence arises the opening for that

strong delusion to believe the lie, to which those that have pleasure in unrighteousness expose themselves, by handling words of truth without receiving the love of the truth. This "man of sin," the head of *the* apostacy, is hereafter to be wasted by the Spirit of the Lord's mouth, and to be destroyed by the brightness of His glorious coming.

It is right however to state, that there are many pious christians who, while they agree in the general character here attributed to Romanism, yet see in this prophecy something more even that can be ascribed to that system. These persons consider that the term in which the "man of sin" is spoken of, will require that a single individual should be found to fulfil what is thus foretold. And taking this passage in connection with the prophecies in the Apocalypse, they conclude that it refers to the head of the Infidel power, which (there is reason to believe) will be the agent of tremendous evil, immediately before the Lord's appearance. Perhaps this, like other parts of prophecy, has been communicated to us in language which, while it in some degree points first to one object, may include another beyond, by which it will have its fuller and final accomplishment. Should this be the case, the individual Infidel head may indeed be here described by the apostle; but this would not prevent the proper application of the prophecy in the mean time to the Romish apostacy. It is not uncommon in the Scriptures to designate a succession of persons occupying a certain position by the mention of an individual, and especially in symbolical passages like the present. The head of the infidel confederacy, is to be an individual, governing a body, and administering a system;—and the Pope for the time being is an individual, governing a body, and administering a system. And though the expectation concerning the Infidel head does not include a succession, but looks for the beginning and end of the career of rebellion, within the short administration of one and the same individual; yet each individual Pope during his dominion, (and he who will be the last more especially), will as literally suit the title "the man of sin," as will the single tyrant to whom some exclusively appropriate it. The difficulties which lie in the way

of interpreting "the man of sin" to stand only for the future Infidel head, are much greater than those which are found in understanding it as it has been here explained. The apostacy, which when developed and revealed, has "the man of sin" as its visible head, was already at work in the time of the Apostle; unless therefore it be understood of a power which has an individual head in succession, the *energizing* or strong working that began 1800 years ago, has never yet matured into any more effective manifestation. The Thessalonians knew to what Paul alluded, when he said that there was a power, (as it is in the 6th verse), and a person (as in the 7th), which was impeding the development of the apostacy: but if that person or power was not the Roman Emperor, it is scarcely intelligible how the christians in those days should have known that which was to have so remote an effect: and certainly christians now, who are 1800 years nearer to the foretold result of its being taken out of the way, do not know what it is. While if the impeding power was that of the Roman emperors, it has been taken out of the way for more than twelve centuries; and yet what was to happen "then" would not have happened at all, unless "the man of sin" be the head of the Romish apostacy; but in this case every foretold feature in the description finds its resemblance in the papal system; which, under a man calling himself "the Vicar of Christ," and standing forth therefore a false Christ, condenses "all the deceivableness of unrighteousness" in its doctrines, which are glossed over with a seeming of religious truth.

APPLICATION.

5. This is the first recorded instance of a device which has since been frequently practised by the evil enemy, in order to prevent the powerful effect that would be produced by a calm, a wise, and a scriptural expectation of the Lord's return to the earth to complete the great purposes of his vast work. By false imaginations concerning the glorious appearing of Christ, or by an erroneous estimate regarding the time at which that event will take place, the minds of simple christians are naturally shaken—tossed in an agitating manner, and troubled; and such a result

also prepares a serious disappointment for those who may have been led to expect the crisis, when afterwards the anticipations are not realized; and further gives the scoffer and the worldly an occasion for profane mockery on one of the most solemn subjects that can engage the mind of man. To induce warm-hearted christians to put forward unscriptural notions and unjustifiable anticipations, especially with reference to the time when the Lord's coming will take place, is therefore a usual snare laid by Satan. All such persons assume some scriptural statement as the ground of their views, but they do not take in the completeness of the whole scope of scripture, and therefore are deceived by imperfect notions. The danger was greatest in the first period of the church's history, because the interpretation of chronological passages had not been tested and rectified by historical experience; but the danger becomes great also at a time when history has almost unrolled the full length of the prophetical dates, so that the great event to which all history verges suggests itself readily to every reader's mind; and therefore many are likely to dwell upon those partial views which are calculated to lead into error. Accordingly we find that, while a mistaken cry that the Lord is *immediately* at hand has been set up in the church upon several occasions, from time to time, during the centuries that have elapsed since that which began in Thessalonica, that mistaken cry has been repeated now in these latter days, when 1800 years have seemed to stretch over most of the numbers found in scripture, which form the ground of calculations with respect to time, more frequently, and by a greater variety of professing christians than at any former period. And in consequence of this many persons have been induced by these mistakes of some, to fall into the opposite error of supposing that the Lord's coming will be at least so long delayed that there is no need of present watchfulness for it; and thus they go nigh to class themselves with those to whom St. Peter alludes in saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. iii. 2—4.) When the apostle desired to correct the error of the Thessalonians, he did so by pointing to the clear tokens of the approach of the

event. So far from dissuading them from expecting it, he taught them how they might the more surely discern the signs by which the expectation might be warranted; thus giving a fresh impulse to the watchfulness which our Lord had urged upon all with reference to this same great prospect (Mark xiii. 32—37); and it appears also from the incidental expression, "Remember ye not that, when I was with you, I told you these things," that the apostle had made the more important signs of the Lord's coming a part of the very earliest instruction he gave to the converts to christianity, in the course of the few weeks during which he was with them, and within which their conversion took place. (Acts xvii. 2.) The application therefore to ourselves of the caution given by Paul in this letter is, that it should make us wisely attentive to the signs of the times, in order to compare them with the promised tokens of the Lord's coming; guarding diligently against the snare into which we may be led by an incomplete notion of the preparatory events; and being only the more anxious to discover the true marks of the approaching crisis, as we find many zealous persons misleading others by over-estimating those signs which may be mistaken.

6. Whether or not we receive the opinion which interprets this passage as applicable to Romanism, the delusive system of the church of Rome may be justly characterized as a "mystery of iniquity;" the evil of which lies hidden beneath the profession of the name of Christ, while it puts forth ideas and doctrines connected with that name that entirely falsify the notion of the real Christ, and which are consistent with matters of belief and of practice distinctly opposed to those which The Christ approves. Hence that false doctrine, thus planted mysteriously in the mind, bears the fruit of unrighteousness carrying deceitfully the appearance of righteousness;—the works that seem to be good deceive by making an unrighteous claim for reward, as of merit, even such merit as can, in a degree, take the place of the atonement of Christ. This "deceivableness of unrighteousness" distinguishes every part of the system; and is the means by which the mind may become infatuated, so as to receive as good that which

is essentially evil. The apostle shews us however what it is that prepares the mind to be susceptible of this infatuation. The fault lies in the affections of the heart:—a *love* of the truth is the sure preservative from so deplorable a blindness; and the enjoyment of "pleasure in unrighteousness"—the wish that the wrong could be tolerated, and that the right were the wrong—this leaves the mind open to the snare; and the heart, resisting the Spirit of God, is left of that Spirit to all the active influence of the welcomed lie that deludes the mind. This apostolic statement can alone afford a complete explanation of the strange results that have been seen in these latter times to follow the strong efforts of Romanism to rise again to power:—enlightened men have seemed to deliver their eyes to be blindfolded by Romish guides; and men that appeared to possess spiritual freedom have submitted their minds to the slavery of Romish despotism. We are constrained to believe that such men had not received the *love* of the truth; and by wishing to find falsehood to be true, they have been allowed to fall into the strong delusion to believe the lie which their hearts had yearned after. The principle applies to every error: unless the will be so turned to God that we love the truth, and seek it as a loved thing, however repugnant it may be to the natural desires, we are only withheld from embracing the opposite error by the lingering forbearance of a merciful God, who does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. If however we outrage that forbearance, and the Saviour withdraws his restraining grace, the mind and conscience readily and rapidly follow the direction of the heart; and no falsehood will be so gross, but that the mind thus deluded will "believe the lie"—no act will be so inconsistent, but that the conscience thus taught to "do not the truth" will consent and approve. (ii. 7—12.)

7. The awful character here foretold—the man of sin—is called "the son of perdition." This title is given by our Lord to one other person, whom we may believe from this fact, to have typified this man of sin. Judas Iscariot, was called "the son of perdition;" and that too by the

Lord Jesus, in that communion with his Father, which he permitted his disciples to hear on the eve of his passion. (John xvii. 12.) Judas was an apostle of the Saviour—"one of the twelve"—yet he was an antichrist of whom the Lord could say, "Have not I chosen you twelve? and one of you is a devil." (John vi. 70.) His treachery to the Master he professed to serve arose from covetousness. He betrayed that Master to his enemies; but although he crucified Jesus, he thereby promoted the more complete manifestation of the glory of that Lord; and in doing so, he brought on his own destruction. And like unto this has been the course of the man of sin, as seen in the character of Romanism. Claiming to be the head of the apostolic church, the doctrines which the Pope administers are "doctrines of devils." (1 Tim. iv. 1—3.) Professing to be the Vicar of Christ, he betrays His name for the lust of power, and the covetousness of this world. He persecutes to the death the spiritual people of God, true members of Christ's body; but in striving to crush them, he promotes the glory of the Lord in the persons of His confessors and martyrs; and when ultimately he shall seem to have prevailed, it shall be the immediate prelude to his own destruction. How attentive should the servants of God be to the call of the latter days, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (ii. 4.)

8. The exhortation with which the apostle closes this portion is of universal application; especially in days when every attempt is made to shake the minds of christians from truly apostolic doctrine, transmitted to us in God's written word. "Stand fast," and hold that which we are thus taught, is the important command which may be considered as the great present duty of every member of Christ's church: and while we see the sad tokens of the increasing boldness of the man of sin, we may be encouraged by the certainty that the Lord will "then" come, when that wicked one shall be fully revealed; so that the marks of the progress of the evil power may be taken as the tokens of the speedier consummation of the glorious

result, to those who "stand fast," and maintain to the end the simplicity of the faith of Christ. The apostle shewed by his own practice, what is the effectual way in which we may help one another in this arduous struggle. He used continual intercession, in behalf of those for whom his heart was interested: and it would be well if, seeing the shaking of the minds of many, and the delusion of some who receive not the love of the truth, we should be the more earnest in prayer for those who are in danger of being deceived, that God would comfort their hearts, and stablish them in every good word and work. (ii. 15—17.)

QUESTIONS.

What are my expectations concerning the return of the Lord Jesus to the earth? Are they scriptural? Do they promote watchfulness? Are they agitating and alarming? Are they calm and hopeful?

Do any of the doctrines on which I more especially dwell, tend at all towards Romish principles? How do I watch against these? Have I any leaning towards them? Do I diligently endeavour to avoid the points of character which mark the son of perdition?

Have I stood fast, when principles of scriptural truth that I love have been found fault with?

THE PRAYER.

Almighty God, give me grace that I may cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and dead, I may rise to the life immortal, through Him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Let me not be troubled or anxious at every false alarm that may be made in thy church, as though the Lord Jesus were at the very door, and ready to appear in the clouds of heaven; but let me ever be looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of that glorious day, with prayerful hope, and calm expectation. Guard me, O Lord, from all false doctrine and heresy, and especially from that mystery of

iniquity, which is even now powerfully at work; suffer me not to be deluded by the falsehoods that are put forth, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in the church of Rome. Preserve me from the least approach to those errors; let me not desire that any teaching were true, but that which is according to thy holy word, lest I be drawn away into the condemnation of the son of perdition. Give me strength to stand fast in the profession of the faith once delivered to the saints; and grant also the same strength to those whom I would especially desire to commend to thy mercy. Do thou, O Lord Jesus Christ, and God, even our Father, which hast loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort our hearts, and stablish us firmly in every good word and work. AMEN.

THIRD PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

2 THESSALONIANS III.

INDEX WORDS.	
Prayer asked—its object.	III. FINALLY, brethren, pray for us, THAT the word of the Lord may have *free* course, [*may run*], and be glorified,
	even as it is with you:
	2 AND THAT we may be delivered from unreasonable [*absurd*] and wicked men: FOR all *men* have not faith.
which was attained in their case.	3 BUT the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.
	4 AND we have confidence in the Lord touching you, THAT ye both do and will do the things which we command you.
Prayer offered.	5 AND the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ [or, *the patience of Christ*].

Special injunction

6 NOW we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

his own example

7 FOR yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: FOR we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

9 NOT BECAUSE we have not power, BUT to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

10 FOR even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither

11 should he eat. FOR we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

12 NOW them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

General injunction

13 BUT ye, brethren, be not weary [or, *faint not*] in well doing.

14 AND if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, [or, *signify that man by an epistle*], and have no company with him,

15 that he may be ashamed. YET count *him* not as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

Closing prayer.

16 NOW the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord *be* with you all.

Signature.

17 The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

EXPLANATION.

Having now disposed of the main object he had in view in writing, the apostle proceeds (before closing his letter) to refer to some other matters in the Thessalonian church, which had been reported to him. In introducing this subject however, he begins by asking the Thessalonians to make his own ministry an object of their prayers; that the gospel preached by Paul, might spread rapidly from place to place, and be welcomed by men, so that its effects might bring glory to the Lord every where as it had done among themselves; suggesting the duty of praying for similar blessings to others, as the proper consequence of their own mercies.

He enters into particulars as to what they should ask on his behalf. In preaching the gospel he would be exposed to violent opposition from two classes of men;—those who from folly were unable to judge as to the value and importance of the doctrines put forth, whose senseless prejudice would excite them to resist the truth;—and those whose immoral inclinations and habits would equally indispose them to receive it. Paul begged them to pray for his deliverance from the enmity of all such; remembering that it was not every man who was capable of rightly appreciating and receiving the doctrines he taught, both the classes referred to having perverted their minds and hardened their hearts against the faith of the gospel.

Then making use of the word faith in another sense, in connection with the thought of the goodness of God in Christ to the Thessalonians, he told them that however incapable of faith men might make themselves by their sins, the Lord is faithful to his promises. It had been said in the former letter, that the faithfulness of Him who had called them, ensured the completion of that which He had begun in them (1 Thess. v. 24); and the apostle now repeated the same truth, bidding them be sure that the faithful Lord would confirm and establish them in the doctrines they had received, and at the same time would preserve them from the power of the evil one, (which is the more correct rendering of the original.) Paul's assured conviction of this faithfulness of the Lord Jesus, led him to feel a confident belief concerning the Thessalonians—that they were carefully carrying out the injunctions which he had already given them, and also that they would diligently continue in the same course of obedience. This settled confidence did not however, prevent him from earnestly praying that God might accomplish these things in them. He again gave utterance to his feelings in prayer on their behalf; and he besought the Lord, the Holy Ghost, so to guide their affections, that the love of the Father might be shed abroad in their hearts; and that they might patiently watch for the glorious manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ on his return from heaven.

The apostle now proceeded to the special matter which remained to be noticed. When he was with them, he had

given very plain directions, as to the quiet diligence in their several stations, which ought to distinguish christians; in writing his former letter too he had particularly mentioned this point, and referred them to his personal instructions. (1 Thess. iv. 11, 12.) It seems however, that little attention had been paid to his directions on this point; and his anxious enquiries concerning the state of the church at Thessalonica had made him acquainted with the conduct of some of the christians there, which was quite contrary to the self-denying quiet diligence he had inculcated. He now therefore used the language of authority; and, stating his commands to be given in the name of Jesus Christ their common Lord, he strictly enjoined them to withdraw themselves from the society of every professing member of the church, whose conduct was not in this particular ordered according to the instructions that Paul had so expressly given. Such persons are said to "walk disorderly," an expression which has reference to the marching of soldiers in ranks; such did not keep the rank, but might be said to be stragglers, who broke the order of the whole.

After thus employing the language of authority, the apostle pointed to the example he had set them. The Thessalonians knew well that they ought to follow this example:—he had not conducted himself amongst them contrary to the order of God's requirement—he had not broken the ranks in his christian walk amongst them. So far from countenancing idleness and dependence on charity (the sins he was reproving), he had not been beholden to any person for his necessary food, without paying for what he eat. And in order that he might do this even in a season of scarcity, almost amounting to a famine, when the price of corn was six times its ordinary value, (see "Guide to the Acts of the Apostles" portion 32, page 223), he had actually worked with his own hands (probably at the occupation of tent-making Acts xviii. 3.) Nay because, while preaching the Gospel there was not time during the day to gain enough at this labour, he had devoted part of the night to the work; rather than bring any expence upon those whom he was instructing in the truths of the Gospel. He had not been compelled to

do this, for he might have required them to keep him, "even as the Lord had ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel:" (1 Cor. ix. 6—14.) but he had acted thus, specially for the purpose of affording them an example, which they might afterwards apply to their own case. Nor had he left them to find out how to apply this example, but while with them he had distinctly charged them to act upon that plain maxim of justice and right reason, that those who would not work, must not be supplied in idleness.

Paul wrote thus strongly and plainly, because he had been informed that there were some persons amongst the christians in Thessalonica, who were precisely of the character he had been describing—conducting themselves in the idle and disorderly manner he had pointed out, not only neglecting those necessary labours which belonged to their own circumstances and condition, but occupying themselves very busily in the concerns of others, and in matters which did not belong to them. Having already given a solemn command to the church generally as to the conduct to be pursued towards these persons, he now addressed a command to the offending individuals themselves, with an appeal of similar solemnity. He enjoined them authoritatively, and exhorted them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose faith they professed, that they should alter their conduct, and quietly occupy themselves with their own duties and affairs, in such a manner as would enable them to gain their own livelihood, earning their bread before they eat it.

Then addressing again the more consistent portion of the Thessalonian church, the apostle urges them not to be induced by the idle and disorderly conduct of some who would impose on them, to be backward in acts of self-denying benevolence towards others who might be really in need of their charitable assistance—they were not to faint in their efforts of christian charity. With regard to any person who should refuse to submit to the injunctions which Paul had now written, the other members of the church were desired to mark him, and to abstain from brotherly intercourse with him; thus making such an evident difference in their conduct towards him, as should

make him feel shame for his inconsistent idleness. Still they were not to act towards him as if they looked on him in the light of an enemy; but on the contrary, their behaviour ought to have in view his reformation and restoration, for which purpose they ought to admonish him, as dealing with a christian brother.

Paul concludes his letter with a prayer for a blessing on the Thessalonian church. The prayer with which he closed his former epistle was addressed to God, as "the very God of peace;" and now, after referring to those who were causing trouble in the church by disorderly conduct, he applies to the same Lord of peace, intreating Him to bestow upon them the gift of peace at all times, and by all means, even those that might seem most likely to prevent peace amongst christians. He added a blessing, praying that the Lord might be with them all.

It seems evident that Paul was in the habit of dictating his epistles to some one who wrote them down (Rom. xvi. 22); and the fact that the epistle to the Galatians and that to Philemon were not written in this manner, tends to shew that the rest were. (Gal. vi. 11. Philemon 19.) At the end of each however, the apostle usually added with his own hand some short sentence as a token, which authenticated the letter as coming from himself. (1 Cor. xvi. 21. Col. iv. 18.) This he states to have been his custom "in every epistle" writing at the same time this customary salutation with his own hand. The words, "So I write," were placed after this usual token.

The closing benediction he also probably added with his own hand, as the person who had been writing had already inserted the blessing dictated to him. After writing his customary token, Paul may have added himself the apostolic benediction, praying that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ might be with them all. Amen.

APPLICATION.

9. We have already had occasion to observe the practical illustration of constant prayerfulness, which these Epistles to the Thessalonians contain; so that while the assurance that the apostle prays for them, and the request that they

will pray for him, is distinctly expressed, the evidence that he does so is found in many parts of the letters themselves. The injunction in the present portion directs us to the duty of prayerfully remembering those ministers, through whom we have received the blessings of spiritual life, and the comforts of the gospel hope. Paul's desire was, that the prayers of his Thessalonian converts should be offered for the further success of his ministry, to the increase of God's glory, by the addition to the church of souls, who should be his "hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing," even as they themselves were. While this was suggested to them as the first and most important object of their supplications for him, he mentioned other particulars which were to enter into their prayers:—specially his protection and deliverance from the power of the opposers of the gospel. This shews us the duty and benefit of entering into much detail in our prayers on behalf of ministers; and teaches us not to rest satisfied with a general supplication for such blessings as are common to every case. We should consider the particular position of the minister for whom we are interested; and reflecting on the peculiar dangers or difficulties which are likely to belong to his individual circumstances, we should act upon this earnest request of the apostle, as though it had been made directly, by him for whom we would pray, to ourselves personally. The fact that we have received the blessing of the gospel ourselves, and that the Holy Spirit is bringing forth evidence that it has been applied to our own cases, involves as a necessary consequence that we should consider it a duty to pray for its wider extension. In discharging this duty we are naturally drawn to desire, that the instrument of blessing to ourselves should be made more extensively the means of blessing others. We may sometimes be led to suppose, that the result which has already followed the preaching of any particular minister may be calculated upon in other cases; and we may perhaps find, that this feeling tends to make us think, that prayer for the object may not be so necessary. Yet in the very passage in which Paul asks for these special prayers, he himself sets an example of earnest supplication on behalf of the Thessalonians, at the same time that he stated his full

"confidence in the Lord touching them," that they both did and would continue to do that which he prayed God they might be directed to do. The ground of faith in prayer for particular objects is, that they may properly be considered as included in some general promise, given by God in the holy Scriptures; but in order to justify an expectation of the answer one rule of universal application is, that "for this thing the Lord will be enquired of:"—the promise must be pleaded, and its fulfilment humbly sought in earnest and believing prayer.

See also applications to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians Nos. 2, 3, 16, and 26.

10. The classification of the opposers, here made by Paul, is such as suits all generations of men. He asked for prayer in order to be delivered from unreasonable, absurd, foolish men, and also from wicked men; thus dividing those "who have not faith." The folly by which prejudice and worldly notions are employed in resisting the entrance of the truth into the heart incapacitates multitudes for believing the gospel; while vast multitudes of another class unfit their minds for the exercise of right judgment, by indulgence in things contrary to the holy will of God; so that the love of sin produces a disinclination to admit as true, what the mind and the conscience cannot deny. This disinclination gathers strength in refusing to receive the truth in the love of it, and the hatred to holiness thus fostered incapacitates for obedience to the faith. Both these classes of persons are opposers to the faithful ministers of the Gospel; and however they may be withheld from violence by circumstances, it needs but an exciting cause and a fitting opportunity to render them as sanguinary as the persecuters of Paul were.

See Application to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians No. 18.

11. It is very painful to observe how soon the tares sown by the enemy flourished amongst the good seed of the Lord's planting. The church at Thessalonica had scarcely been gathered into a visible body, before there were found amongst its members those who made mer-

chandize of the christian benevolence that was prompt in supplying the necessities of the poorer brethren; and the idle and self-indulgent were glad to take advantage of the christian name, in order to obtain their daily food without submitting to the universal requirement of daily duty. The empty occupation of curious enquiries into other mens' matters—the idle and sinful gossip about the concerns of others—these suited the slothful habits of such persons, who were not ashamed to receive the supply of their necessary wants from the abundance of the labour of others, which the arrangement resulting from christian love brought into the general treasury from whence the destitute were fed. Such characters have been but too common in every age and condition of the church; and if they were not excluded by the persecution which purified the first church in Thessalonica, we can scarcely expect to find the church in a professing christian country to be without them. While some glaring instances may be evidently known, the hidden principle of evil upon which such persons act may oftentimes lie undetected in hearts, which may be availing themselves of christian charity in order to avoid some course of painful self-denial. There may thus be much want of orderly arrangement in the heart by which a person may give up independence, and lose the right sense of that christian propriety which dignifies the man who eats "his own bread," though it may not be evident to the church that he is *walking disorderly*.

With reference to the Apostle's example, see Application to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, No. 6.

12. The directions of St. Paul as regards the conduct of consistent christians towards those who walk disorderly, afford us a specimen of the apostolic discipline in the earliest age of the church. It is founded on the instructions of the Lord Jesus conveyed by the answer to the inquiring servants in the parable. When they asked the question, "Wilt thou then that we go and gather up the tares?" Christ warned them of their incapacity to discern the false from the true seeds, and bid them "let both grow together till the harvest." The apostle applied this to the case before him, combining it with the exercise of

christian love. Conduct evidently inconsistent with order calls for a reproving demeanour in those who observe it: we are bound to withdraw from the company of such as walk disorderly; and to restrain that brotherly intercourse which should be the means by which christians help each other amidst the world's trials. Brotherly admonition however should not be restrained, but rather urged all the more earnestly. The withdrawal must be as for a season, in grief, from a brother, and therefore wholly different from a necessary separation from an enemy. A real sense of our own infirmity and unworthiness, concurring with a spirit of love towards the brethren, will be a sure means of leading us to act with tenderness towards those whom we are constrained to reprove, even when we are obliged to withdraw ourselves from their company.

QUESTIONS.

In what proportion are my prayers intercessory? How frequently do I pray for my own minister? Do I often enter into the detail of his circumstances in my prayers on his behalf?

What prejudices against the gospel have I entertained? Are they entirely subdued? What secret sins have made me wish, that certain parts of God's law were not so strict? Has grace entirely controlled them?

In what sense may I be said to eat my own bread? Is there any part of my conduct for which I may be considered as walking disorderly? Am I amongst the givers, or amongst the receivers of christian charity? How do I behave towards those in the church, of whom I am forced to disapprove, as evidently walking disorderly? Have I withdrawn from such? Have I admonished them? Have I dealt with them as with an enemy? or as with an erring brother?

THE PRAYER.

Gracious Lord, who hast been pleased to permit thy poor sinful servants to be helpers of each other, by coming to thy throne of grace in prayer one for another, I humbly thank thee for this great benefit of the mediation of the one great Intercessor, through whom alone we can approach thee acceptably, either for ourselves, or for others. Give

me the grace of earnest intercession on behalf of those whom I love; and especially on behalf of those from whom I have received any spiritual blessing. Enable me to feel the gift of the blessing to myself to be a call to constant supplication for the extending of the same blessing to others. Subdue in me every prejudice that may hinder my hearty belief in the gospel. Control every impulse to evil—every secret sin—that might lessen my love of the glorious truths of salvation by Christ. Give me a spirit of humble self-denial, that I may be free from dependence on others. Strengthen me in the work to which thy Providence calls me, that I may eat my own bread, and be able to give of that which abounds to me, to mitigate the sufferings of those who have none. Teach me how to adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things, walking in all order and propriety, and letting my light shine before men. And, O Lord Almighty, when I am forced to behold the inconsistencies of others who profess thy holy name, give me grace to mourn over them, and to exhort them with brotherly admonition, and christian reproof: taking warning myself by the evil I perceive and striving to bring all into the unity of the Spirit, and the bond of peace, to the glory of the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. AMEN.

An Index of the Explanations given in this Volume; that is, an account of the principal subjects arranged in the order of the alphabet; so that the reader may find out where to turn for the explanation of any subject he wishes.

[The letter (a) at the end of the line, shews that the subject is to be found in the Application. When this is not put, the subject is to be found in the Explanation.]

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A GUIDE
TO THE EPISTLES.

THE FIRST
EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

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A GUIDE TO THE EPISTLES.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

WRITTEN AT EPHESUS, A.D. 55.

INTRODUCTION.

It will be necessary to recall the remembrance of Paul's ministry at Corinth, and of the subsequent matters relating to the church there, as they may be gathered from the Scriptures, in order that we may enter upon the examination of this letter with a clear view of its object. To do this we may refer to the explanation given in the "Guide to the Acts of the Apostles," for which purpose the following extracts may suffice.

When Paul had sent Timothy and Silas away from Athens, he went himself to Corinth, the chief city of the province of Achaia. "This was one of the most celebrated cities in Europe; little inferior to Athens in reputation for the learning of its inhabitants, and much superior for its commerce and wealth, and for its fashionable amusements, which drew persons together from all parts of the world. It was besides, a city notorious for immorality.

"At Corinth Paul met with a Jewish christian, named Aquila, a native of Pontus in Asia, but who had just arrived from Rome with his wife Priscilla. They had been forced to leave Rome, in consequence of a decree issued by the Emperor Claudius, by which the Jews were expelled from that capital. We may gather from history that they had been divided into factions amongst themselves, which occasioned tumults and disturbances in the city; and

being very numerous there, it was judged right to banish them from Rome. There is reason to conclude, that the disturbances to which the historian alludes were produced by the opposition of the unbelieving Jews to the progress of christianity amongst their number. Paul joined company with Aquila and Priscilla; and as they happened in their youth to have learned the same art, which was tent-making, they employed themselves together in this business, in order to obtain the means of subsistence; which must have been the more urgently needful from the scarcity which at that time prevailed, and which rendered the necessaries of life extremely dear.

"While however Paul was thus occupied during the week, he did not neglect his missionary work, but went every sabbath to the Jewish synagogue; where he discussed the subject of religion, and endeavoured to induce both the Jews and the Greeks whom he found there, to receive the doctrines of truth.

"When the Apostle had been thus engaged for some time, his dear friend and son in the faith, Timothy, came to him, having executed the commission on which he had been sent to Thessalonica; and at the same time Silas also arrived at Corinth, probably from Philippi, bringing with him a third contribution from the church in that city. Paul had received such assistance from the Philippians twice at Thessalonica (Phil. iv. 16); and as the apostle afterwards informs the christians at Corinth, that when he was in want amongst them, "the brethren which came from Macedonia" supplied his necessities, we may conclude these to be Silas and Timothy, who came to him from that province at this time." (2 Cor. xi. 8—10.)

"Under the encouragement and comfort afforded by the return of his beloved companions, and the account they brought him of the blessing given to his previous labours,—and relieved from the necessity of employing his time in tent-making, by the seasonable arrival of the money from Philippi,—Paul felt the strongest impulse to a still greater earnestness in the missionary work: and, as the Jews always claimed his first attention, he lifted up Jesus as the Christ before them with increased energy. This, however, only led them to increased opposition, and to blaspheme

the holy name of Jesus. Upon which, expressing his warm feelings of indignation in the manner customary amongst them, by shaking his clothes, he took them to record, that it was not his fault if they perished, but that the crime of their own perdition must be upon their own heads; warning them that he now felt himself free to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, to whom he would preach. Then leaving their synagogue, he retired to a house close by, belonging to a person of the name of Justus, a proselyte, and probably converted. He did not however leave the Jews without receiving a decided testimony to the power of the gospel; for Crispus, who was the chief ruler of the synagogue, was converted, together with all his family. Many also of the citizens of Corinth, who heard the apostle preach, believed the gospel and were baptized. Paul himself administered baptism to Crispus, but to none other, except a person of the name of Gaius, and the family of one called Stephanas.

"After this distinct opening of the mission to the Gentiles of Corinth, it pleased the Lord Jesus Christ, to appear to Paul in a vision by night. He bid him not to fear, but to speak boldly and unceasingly with confident courage; assuring him that He was with him, and would permit no one to attack him so as to injure him. To this, the Lord added the encouraging declaration, that there were many persons in the city of Corinth whom he claimed as his own. After this vision, Paul considered that his mission was for a time settled to be at Corinth: and he remained there for a year and a half preaching the gospel." (Acts xviii. 1—11.)

"In the course of Paul's continued residence at Corinth, a new proconsul of the name of Gallio was sent from Rome to govern the province of Achaia. The Jews seem to have considered this as a good opportunity for preventing Paul from continuing his preaching of the gospel; and they conspired together to bring an accusation against him as a vagabond, who was inducing people to worship God in a manner contrary to law; by which they might either have meant that Paul, being a Jew, was leading the Jews from the worship, the exercise of which was guaranteed to them by the Emperor's sanction; or that he was seducing

the Gentiles into a kind of worship which was contrary to the Roman law, as being that of what they called atheists.

"After the case had been stated before the proconsul, Paul was about to speak in his own defence: when Gallio put an end to the proceedings, by telling the Jews that if they had any accusation to bring against Paul, which charged him with a breach of the peace, an act of dishonesty, or any improper roguery, he was ready to judge the cause, as it would reasonably belong to his office, which was a civil one; but if the matter in hand was one of religious differences, and related to the interpretation of their law, they must decide it amongst themselves, for he would not have any thing to do with the judgment of such points; and so he bid them be gone from the court. Before however the parties left the governor's presence, the Gentiles who were looking on in the public court rushed upon Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, who had come to bring the charge on the part of the Jews; and gave him a beating as he was leaving the court. Though this violence was an illegal proceeding, yet Gallio took no notice of it, and did not interfere to prevent it." (Acts xviii. 12—17.)

"After this attempt of the Jews, Paul remained many days in Corinth; and at length he determined to go into Syria. This determination appears to have been made by direct inspiration, as we learn from the apostle's statement in his epistle to the Galatians (ii. 2); though it does not appear whether the divine revelation, that he was to go up to Jerusalem, was made to him before he left Corinth, or subsequently in his voyage. He took leave of the christians at Corinth, and set sail from that port, taking with him Aquila and his wife Priscilla, with whom he had been lodging." (Acts xviii. 18.)

"After Paul had left Ephesus upon the occasion of the short visit he had paid to that city on his way to Syria from Greece, a Jew named Apollos arrived there. He was a native of Alexandria, a city where learning was very much cultivated; a man of great eloquence, and one who was thoroughly acquainted with the books of the old Testament. He had also been taught so much of the knowledge of Jesus being the Messiah, as the disciples of

John the Baptist knew; and being a man of earnest zeal, he spared no pains to communicate to others that portion of knowledge which he possessed. He spoke freely and courageously in the synagogue of the Jews, where Aquila and his wife (who had remained at Ephesus after Paul's departure) had an opportunity of hearing his doctrine. These christian Jews immediately sought his society, and inviting him to their home, they explained to him the full gospel of Jesus Christ in a more accurate manner, and brought him into communion with the Church.

"After his establishment in christian knowledge, Apollos felt a desire to assist the christians in the province of Achaia, where his scriptural knowledge would be of great importance in controversy with the learned Jews of Corinth. The church at Ephesus approved of his desire, and sent him across the Sea, with letters of affectionate commendation to the brethren in Greece. Upon his arrival there, he became an important instrument in building up those who by God's grace, were believers already; engaging in public discussion with the Jews, his powerful arguments, drawn from the Old Testament, had great effect in proving that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah."

"We may infer that Peter was at Corinth, and preached the gospel there after Apollos (1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 22); and there are other reasons for concluding that he went there on his way to Rome, in the course of his missionary journey amongst the Jews of Asia, of Greece, and of Italy; which must have begun about the same time with that of Paul amongst the Gentiles."

Having traced all that is known of the establishment and progress of the church at Corinth, up to the time of Paul's first epistle, we have now to consider the occasion upon which that letter was written.

"It was during the latter part of the two years and three months of Paul's residence at Ephesus, that he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, the date of which appears to have been early in the year 55. (1 Cor. xvi. 8, 19.) Several circumstances connected with the writing of this letter may be gathered from different passages in it, taken together with other passages in the Acts.

"We have already seen that Apollos had gone to

Corinth, with letters from the Ephesian christians, some time before Paul returned to Ephesus. (Acts xix. 1.) After remaining for a season at Corinth, during which he greatly assisted in strengthening and establishing the christians there (1 Cor. iii. 6), he must have returned to Ephesus; for we find that Paul wished him to accompany the messengers whom he judged it necessary to send from Ephesus to Corinth, in consequence of the state of the church there. The chief of these messengers was Timothy; Apollos was not disposed to return to Corinth with them, but promised to do so if he should find it convenient afterwards.

"Paul sent these messengers to Corinth in consequence of information he had received from some members of the family of a person named Chloe; who, arriving at Ephesus from Corinth, made the apostle acquainted with the distressing state of division and contention which prevailed amongst the christians there (I Cor. i. 11, 12); together with other scandalous inconsistencies in the conduct of some. After Timothy and the brethren had set forth on their journey, Paul received a letter from the Corinthian church, in which they sought his advice and instructions concerning several points of discipline and conscience. This letter was brought to him by three Corinthian christians, named Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. (1 Cor. vii. 1; xvi. 17.) It was in answer to this letter that Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians; in the former part of which (chaps. i. to vi.) he expresses in writing the chief object of his having already sent Timothy; and in the latter part he replies at length to their several inquiries. Acting upon the arrangement made in the conference at Jerusalem (which had taken place since the apostle had left Corinth), he desired the Corinthians to contribute towards the support of the poor christians of the original church of the circumcision; and he states that he had given a similar order to the churches of Galatia."

FIRST PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS I. 1—9.

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Thankfulness— its occasion	4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace 5 of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; THAT in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge;
present evidence	6 EVEN AS the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:
	7 SO THAT ye come behind in no gift;
future expectation	waiting for the coming [*revelation*] of our Lord Jesus Christ:
result assured	8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, THAT *ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
through God's faithfulness.	9 God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

EXPLANATION.

The customary manner of beginning a letter, at the time when the apostle lived, has been already referred to in explaining the salutation at the beginning of the first epistle to the Thessalonians. Paul here commences with his name as in the former case, but he inserts his high title with some reference to the peculiar manner in which he was honored with it. He declares himself to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, called to that great office by the will of God; which in his case had been miraculously

manifested. (Acts ix.) In the salutation, Paul associates with himself Sosthenes, whom he calls a brother or fellow-christian. This was no doubt the person who had been chief ruler of the synagogue in Corinth, at the time that Paul was brought before Gallio. The crowd of pagans had, upon that occasion, beaten Sosthenes in the court (Acts xviii. 17); and now we find that he (as well as his predecessor Crispus) had been converted to the faith of the gospel. (Acts xviii. 8.) It does not appear, whether Paul included him in his address to the Corinthians because he happened to be with him at Ephesus, or whether he introduced his name for any other reason.

The letter is addressed to the church of God, that is, the body of christians at Corinth; to those who had been made holy by the Spirit uniting them to Christ Jesus, and therefore "called saints." He extends his address to all professing christians every where; whom he describes as persons that call upon the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Master of all. It has been however supposed, that when the apostle speaks of christians in every place, he meant only to include the whole province of Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital. The prayer of his salutation to the Corinthian church was the same with which he had saluted the Thessalonian. He desired that they might be blessed with grace and peace from God, our Almighty Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord.

He begins by telling them that he constantly thanked God on their account, because God had been pleased to bestow upon them his grace in Christ Jesus. The effect of this grace was very abundant, so that many of them were gifted with much power in preaching the gospel (perhaps the special gift of tongues may also be referred to), and with a complete knowledge of the doctrines of Christ. This had resulted from the way in which they had been settled in the gospel, as it had been testified to them when Paul first preached Christ amongst them. Hence they were deficient in none of those spiritual gifts which God was pleased to bestow upon his church, while they were in constant and earnest expectation of the glorious revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven. And that Saviour, who had at first so settled them in

the gospel, would establish them in it even to the end; having begun the good work in them He would perform it, so that in the restitution of all things, their sins being blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, they might be found without fault before God at that day. (Phil. i. 6. Acts iii. 19-21.) The apostle placed before them the ground, upon which this precious encouragement might be received with sure confidence. This is nothing less than the faithfulness of God, of which he had given a pledge to every christian, whom he called into spiritual union with his Son Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION.

See Application 1, to the first Epistle to the Thessalonians.

1. We have already found many instances of the prayerful spirit, which marked every part of the apostle's character, and here we have another evidence that he lived under its abiding influence: so that both his remembrances and his hopes of all those to whom he had ministered the gospel, always directed his heart into prayerful communion with God. (See Applications 2 and 3, to 1 Thess.; and Application 4, to 2 Thess.) The connection in which the subject of his thankfulness stands with the prayer of his salutation suggests a striking application: he knew of the much grace that was given to the Corinthian church, so that he always thanked God on their behalf; and he prayed that grace might be given to them. That necessary blessing, the favour of God, must come upon his people in a continual stream, descending upon them from the source of all grace, the Lord Jesus Christ; and the spiritual blessings which were granted to the prayer of yesterday, must be asked for in earnest supplication to-day. The grace already given, greatly encourages the expectation, that the prayer will be answered again; but it does not preclude the necessity of being instant in prayer, as well as earnest in gratitude.

2. The abundant gifts bestowed upon the Corinthian church, are here mentioned in connection with the manner

in which the gospel that bore witness to Christ, had been received, when it was offered to them. It was confirmed in them—they were stablished, strengthened, settled in it; and afterwards they were enriched by that Christ of whom it testified, in all utterance, and all knowledge, so that they were wanting in no gift. And such is God's ordinary mode of dealing, when the gospel is received readily and faithfully; without that distrustful doubt and tardy consent, which impede the ready obedience. The frank and simple believer being soon settled in the faith of the gospel, soon tastes the blessing of its power. And whether extraordinary gifts be bestowed or withholden, a more than ordinary comfort and spiritual energy accompanies the confirmation of the testimony of Christ in their hearts. The glorious prospect of the inheritance of the saints in light, realized in connection with the day of the Lord,—"the times of refreshing from his presence"—gives a power to the thought of his coming, such as enables us to overcome the temptations of the world, and the flesh, and the devil; "while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen," in that joyful expectation.

3. One of the strongest encouragements to an abiding continuance in the faith of the gospel, and in the course of holiness upon which we thereby set forth, is the assurance that He who has begun a good work in us, will perform it unto the day of the Lord, the final consummation. This encouragement is given in the plainest language, in this portion. The apostle assumes, that the testimony of Christ was settled and confirmed in those to whom he writes; and if so, the Lord will settle and confirm them unto the end. He rests the certainty of this upon the faithfulness of God, who "cannot deny himself;" and who, in the effectual call by which a soul is brought into spiritual communion with Christ, gives a pledge that the call shall not be in vain, but that the spiritual member of Christ Jesus shall be kept unto the day when the promised glory shall be bestowed. This doctrine, of an assured confidence in the perseverance of true belicvers, is a difficulty to some sincere christians; because they imagine that a sense of the assured result must relax men's efforts and continual

struggle against sin. There might indeed be some ground for this alarm, if any one could ascertain the certainty of his personal salvation in Christ, by any other means than the testimony of his personal sanctification in Christ. If confirmation unto the end were pledged to any one by name, his knowledge of it might expose him to the danger suggested. But as this pledge of confirmation is only given to character, and every one has to examine and compare himself with the tokens which manifest the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, before he can be justified in receiving the assurance, then such a pledge becomes a most powerful means of assisting every sincere christian in his struggle against sin, and his efforts after holiness. To lose the testimony that he is sealed by the Holy Ghost with the stamp of Christ's likeness, is to lose the scriptural ground of hope that he will be confirmed to the end; but to have the faithfulness of God pledged for the victorious result of the struggle in which any one is engaged, must arm him with tenfold courage in the conflict. (See Application 29, of 1 Thess.)

QUESTIONS.

In what manner is my remembrance of friends connected with my intercourse with God? How often do I remember them prayerfully? Why can I not say (as the apostle said) "always?"

Does my conviction that grace HAS *been given to any one relax my prayers that grace* MAY *be given to any one? especially to myself?*

How have I received the gospel? In simplicity of faith, heartily? or by habit of mind, doubtingly? Do I trace my power or my weakness spiritually, to an established or wavering conviction of the truth of the gospel?

Am I waiting for the revelation of the Lord Jesus? and with what degree of expectation?

Do I possess an assured conviction that God will confirm me unto the end? What effect has this assurance on me? or what effect do I discover in myself from the want of it? How do I trust to God's faithfulness?

THE PRAYER.

Thou God that hearest prayer, teach me to pray, and to

maintain such abiding communion with thee, that I may always pour forth my thanks before thee, together with my supplications in all that my heart needs. I praise thee for the grace thou hast given me hitherto. I intreat thee to give me increase of that grace daily, with thy peace; and also to all those whom my heart would commend to thy mercy. Confirm the testimony of thy dear Son Jesus Christ in me, and enable me to embrace thy saving truth in all simplicity of faith. And do thou bestow upon me thy gracious gifts, even as thou art pleased, to stablish, strengthen, and settle me in the gospel; and mercifully confirm me in thy grace even unto the end. Give me the spirit of confidence in thy faithfulness, and testify within me that thy Spirit hath sealed me unto the day of redemption. O give me an earnest expectation of the glorious day of the manifestation of thy Son Jesus Christ, a full confidence in hope of entering on that day into the joy of my Lord, and a patient waiting for His appearing. Amen.

SECOND PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS I. 10—31.

INDEX WORDS.	
Object of the letter	10 NOW I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing,
Divisions.	and *that* there be no divisions [*schisms*] among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
Paul's information	11 FOR it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house* of Chloe,
	12 that there are contentions among you. NOW this I say, THAT every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.
	13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?
he justifies himself	14 or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but

15 Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had
16 baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also
the houshold of Stephanas: besides, I know not
whether I baptized any other.

his commission — 17 FOR Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach
the gospel:

what to avoid — not with wisdom of words [or, *speech*], lest the
cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

why — 18 FOR the preaching of the cross is to them that
perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved
it is the power of God.

the contrast. — 19 FOR it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom
of the wise, and will bring to nothing the
20 understanding of the prudent." Where *is* the
wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the dis-
puter of this world? hath not God made
21 foolish the wisdom of this world? FOR after
that in the wisdom of God the world by
wisdom knew not God,
it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching
to save them that believe.
22 FOR the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks
seek after wisdom:
23 BUT we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews
a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolish-
24 ness; but unto them which are called, both
Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and
25 the wisdom of God. BECAUSE the foolishness
of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of
What ministers chosen. — 26 God is stronger than men. FOR ye see your
calling, brethren, how that not many wise men
after the flesh, not many mighty, not many
27 noble, *are called:* BUT God hath chosen the
foolish things of the world

why — to confound the wise;
and God hath chosen the weak things of the
world
to confound the things which are mighty;
28 and base things of the world, and things which
are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things
which are not,
29 to bring to nought things that are: THAT no
flesh should glory in his presence.

Where glory due. — 30 BUT of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of
God is made unto us wisdom, and righteous-
ness, and sanctification, and redemption:
31 THAT, according as it is written, "He that
glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

EXPLANATION.

The apostle now enters upon the subject of his letter. He begins with an earnest entreaty, which he urged upon them as his brethren, solemnly invoking the name of the

Lord Jesus Christ whom they all professed to serve as their Lord, that the Corinthian christians would agree together; so that they might maintain the same doctrine, and not be divided into separate parties, but might be entirely restored to a oneness of mind in religious opinions and judgment: (the Greek word translated "perfectly joined together" is used metaphorically, and means literally, "to repair a broken vessel, or mend a torn garment"). He states as a reason for this exhortation, that he had been informed that the Corinthians were thus divided into parties. Some persons of the family of a member of the church, named Chloe, had told him this. He meant to say plainly, that they were all ranging themselves under different teachers; each choosing to attach himself, to the ministry of one or of another, as distinguished from other ministers of the same gospel. One professed to follow Paul, another called himself a disciple of Apollos, another of Peter; while another professed to belong to Christ, as if a follower of Christ were distinguished from the followers of his several ministers. Were there any such divisions in the body of Christ—his church as gathered by Himself—he asks them? Was any other than Christ crucified for them? and in putting this question, he selects (as an illustration, his own name), from amongst those he had referred to as the heads under which the Corinthians were ranging themselves. Was it Paul, who had been crucified for them? Had the baptism, by which they were brought into the visible church, been administered in the name of Paul? Then, in order to shew his repugnance even to the thought of such a thing, and to clear himself from the least suspicion of having encouraged such a distinction even indirectly, he states how thankful he was, that he had not himself administered baptism while at Corinth; except in the cases of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue (Acts xviii. 8), and of Gaius, the person in whose house Paul had lived. (Rom. xvi. 23.) He rejoiced that it had so happened that he had not baptized any other persons, since it would prevent the least encouragement to the notion, that he had baptized in his own name. While he was writing however, he seems to have recollected one other occasion on which he had personally administered

baptism; and he corrects his previous statement by adding to the names of Crispus and Gaius that of Stephanas, who was the first convert to christianity amongst the Corinthians, (1 Cor. xvi. 15), and who, with all his family, had been baptized by Paul himself. Probably this circumstance was recalled to the apostle's mind while writing, by the presence of Stephanas at Ephesus at the time; as he, together with Fortunatus and Achaicus, had been the bearers of a letter from Corinth to which his epistle was a reply.

This remembrance of a third occasion, on which he had himself baptized, led the apostle to reflect; but he could not recollect that he had himself administered the ordinance of baptism to any other than those he had mentioned. And there had been no need for him to do so, for the Lord Jesus had not commissioned him in his apostleship to perform baptism, but to preach the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ; he was sent not to baptize, but to evangelize the people. In doing which, he did not attempt to draw converts by the talent and eloquence of oratory; for fear by so doing, the atonement of Christ manifested in his death upon the cross, which is the centre point of the gospel, should not be the influencing power in gathering those who joined the visible church. This distinction between the exercise of eloquence, and the simple exhibition of Christ's atonement, was an important one. For the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ's death alone appears unreasonable, and a mere folly, to those who reject the gospel, and therefore are lost under just condemnation (Mark xvi. 16): while on the other hand those who, (like the apostle and all true christians) receive the gospel, being joined to Christ by his Spirit, and are saved in Him (Rom. viii. 1), feel and know the doctrine of the cross to be the very power of God himself, irrespective of the influence of man's talents. To this might be applied the solemn declaration of Jehovah by the prophet Isaiah when speaking of the hypocrisy of the Jews, (who yet studied the words of the law, xxix. 13, 14), "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." By the completed atonement of Christ, this declaration had been

accomplished. Where could any famous philosopher be found—where any learned scribe—where any clever and subtle arguer according to the systems of the present age, who could devise for himself the means of salvation, and a prospect of hope in eternity? By the gospel God has proved, that all the combined wisdom of man in the world is but folly, when it attempts to fathom the deep things of God. When, according to the wisdom of God in creation, all the wise men of the world had manifested that man, by his own wisdom, could not attain to the knowledge of God's nature, God thought fit, by means of that in which wise men could see nothing but foolishness—the preaching of the gospel—to apply salvation to those who receive God's truth by believing this gospel; and who become thus contrasted with those who sought the knowledge of God by the powers of their own wisdom.

Paul proceeded to explain this contrast still further. The Jews (he said), who were acquainted with the letter of the Old Scriptures, refused to acknowledge the work of the Messiah until a miraculous sign should be manifested from heaven (Mark. viii. 11, 12); and the intelligent Greeks were endeavouring to test, by the power of philosophical arguments, every thing proposed to them. The Apostles however, simply proclaimed the atonement wrought by Christ—the crucified Saviour—which was rejected as an offence by the Jews; and which was treated as folly by the Greeks; but amongst both the Jews and the Greeks, there were those who were called, by the power of God's own Spirit, to attend to the preaching; and by these, the gospel of Christ crucified thus preached, was recognized and felt to be God's power and God's wisdom. Thus the mode of instruction employed by God, which appeared to be least wise, so that men called it foolishness, is manifested as superior to the highest exercise of man's wisdom; and that which seemed absolutely without power to convince or influence, being of God's power, evidently surpasses the strength of man's power. As a proof of this, Paul bid them consider the means by which those who were "called," had been drawn into the saving faith of the gospel. The instruments chosen by God to produce this effect by their preaching, were not in

general persons who had been eminent for their learning and intelligence, and worldly wisdom—few of them had any special power by their natural talents—few of them were taken from amongst the highborn of the world's society. But in selecting the agents of his own power in the gospel, God had made choice of what was considered foolish by the world, in order that what was looked upon as wise might be put to shame by the superior wisdom of that so called foolishness. He had thought fit to employ that which seemed to be without strength, that he might shew the absolute weakness of that which laid claim to mighty power. Instead of taking men of noble birth, he had selected preachers from amongst the low born, and persons who were looked down upon with contempt; nay, God has made choice of things set at nought as not worth attending to—and as nothing, in order that he might nullify and prove utterly useless those things that were considered as essentially valuable in the world. His object in short was, to make it impossible for man to boast himself of power before God. The apostle next stated, how christians may possess all that the wise, and the mighty, and the noble of the world seek for, and yet fail to attain. While no flesh shall glory in God's presence, those who receive the gospel belong to God by becoming, through the power of the Holy Spirit, members of Christ Jesus. And the same God makes Him, the Head, who is all-wise, to be wisdom to his members—who is perfectly righteous, to be righteousness to them—who is perfectly holy, to be sanctification to them—who has paid the full debt, to be their redemption; and thus that which was written by the prophet Jeremiah (ix. 23, 24) shall be fulfilled by the people of God, that if any man have whereof to boast, he must ascribe the glory to the Lord God, in whom alone every good thing can be done.

(In reading the latter part of this portion, it should be observed that in verse 26, the words "*are called*" are printed in italics in the English Bible, to shew that no such words are found in the original.)

APPLICATION.

4. The evil which the apostle is here endeavouring to

counteract, is one which has ever disturbed the church of Christ. So prone is human nature to find causes for strife, in order to establish self-opinion in opposition to the opinions of others, that it is scarcely possible to find any number of professing christians living together without some matter for controversy. A want of simplicity in receiving the essential truths of the gospel, affords an opportunity (which the evil enemy is ever ready to seize) for dividing, upon secondary points, the hearts of those who should be one in Christ, and should love as brethren. It was the passion for philosophical argument prevailing amongst the Corinthians, which prepared the way for this state of things, even after they became christians. Though acknowledging the name of Christ, and the doctrine of His salvation, their natural inclination found room for exercise in drawing comparisons, and making distinctions between individual ministers of the same gospel; and their evil passions were called into exercise about the merits of their favourite preachers, even while the parties deceived themselves with the notion that they were all one in Christ. The manner in which the apostle reproves this state of things at Corinth, and his anxiety to remove every possible ground upon which he might be charged with having encouraged divisions, ought to make us exercise the greatest watchfulness over our own minds and feelings, lest we fall into the same snare.

5. The divisions at Corinth led the apostle to bring forward into a prominent point of view, the one thing by which they might be avoided. He shewed the great object of his preaching. It was all comprised in what he called "the cross of Christ"—that is, the doctrine of His accepted atonement for sin. The fact that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,"—this being presented to the mind, is employed by the Holy Ghost to affect the heart—to subdue its rebellion—to correct its imperfect views of sin—and gradually to destroy its love for whatever offends God. This is the effect produced through divine power by declaring the gospel. Anything which seeks to recommend this simple

truth by means of the power of argument, or the charm of eloquence, supposes that the gospel itself requires such aids to produce the effect; and if any be apparently converted to the doctrines of truth by such means, it may be feared that, in proportion as the argument or the eloquence were the means which led to the conversion, the cross of Christ will be made of none effect. The influence of that great and wonderful thought, that Christ is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, must be paramount as the producing cause of a true conversion. Hence the apostle was so anxious to disconnect his preaching of that glorious truth from any of those human aids, to which men are apt to attribute the apparent effect.

6. Man is very indisposed to acknowledge the insufficiency of his own wisdom, when exercised with reference to the highest object which can engage it—the nature of God, and His dealings with men. All mankind have some desire to seek after a God implanted in their hearts; but as man has not liked to retain the true God in his knowledge, and as God has withdrawn himself in consequence from the little sphere of man's natural knowledge, every effort made by men, who have in other respects manifested the greatest wisdom, has failed of discovering the way by which God may combine his attribute of mercy with his attribute of justice. The notions of the philosophers, who were clever in matters of sense, have been even more than childishly foolish concerning the nature of God: and when God was pleased to reveal himself to man, as one whose ways are above the search of human wisdom, the publication of his own truth—the preaching of the gospel—was received as foolishness by those whose wisdom it confounded. And so it is to this day. Multitudes who join in the formal repetition of certain creeds, consider the doctrines involved in such statements as utterly foolish, when presented to them in another form. They maintain some notion of their own, which practically supplies the place of the truth in their minds, and deceives them by its appearance of wisdom. Nothing however can make a man partaker of the saving benefits of the gospel,

but an humble reception of that view of God in Christ, which was the grand subject of the apostle's preaching.

7. And this connects the subject with the reproof which the divisions of the Corinthians brought upon them; it led the apostle to point out the general description of persons whom God had pleased to select as the instruments by whom he exercised his power in the preaching of the gospel, and so to expose the folly of their contention about ministers. Not many men of carnal wisdom, not many men of powerful eloquence, not many men of refined education, had been sent forth as the heralds of gospel salvation; God might rather be said to have selected those of least wisdom, of fewest natural talents, of the lower class of society, in order that when the simple truth of their statements confounded the intelligent, the clever, and the eloquent of the world, it might be very plain that the power was from God; and that so the glory might be given to Him alone. What an answer this was to all the objections of the controversialists concerning the ministry of Paul, as opposed to that of Apollos. A practical answer of the same kind may often be drawn from the spiritual condition of various congregations; some minister of the gospel may be followed by crowds who acquire from him the phraseology of spiritual truth, and conform in general to christian requirement, and who boast of belonging to the congregation of the eloquent—the talented—the original—the convincing preacher; but the general aspect of spiritual life amongst them may be too often sickly, and the whole body may be too generally characterized by inconsistency. On the other hand, some ordinary, unattractive, and apparently ungifted minister, who lifts up Christ crucified in simplicity, and without adornment, may be blessed by tending a little flock of quiet but consistent christians; whose testimony might tacitly convey the remark of the apostle, "You see your calling, brethren," how that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

8. Yet whatever be the opinion of those who are worldly wise, God himself has expressed the judgment of truth

concerning all such as receive the gospel in simple faith. They may have had the disadvantage of an erroneous education, as regards the scriptures, like the Jewish scribes —they may have had to struggle against some characteristic tendency to discussion for demonstrative proof, like the philosophers of old; but those who simply embrace the gospel as true, because it is God's own account of Himself, manifest that they are the called of God. Their calling and election having been sure in the counsels of God, will become more and more assured to themselves, and evident to others, by the manifestation of the power of God in their lives. Being spiritually ingrafted *in* Christ Jesus, though they may be looked upon as naturally foolish, Christ is made to them wisdom —though the world may think their hope of salvation presumptuous, yet Christ is made to them righteousness—though they may be weak, and may tremble under the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, yet Christ is made to them sanctification—though they may have been "carnal, sold under sin," yet have they been bought back from its power, for Christ is made unto them redemption; and while they walk humbly in the midst of these high privileges, yet are they able to glory, because every boast they can make leads them to glory in the Lord.

QUESTIONS.

How do I estimate the differences of opinion which exist between some teachers of the same gospel? Am I more occupied in contrasting them, than in gathering instruction for the glory of Christ from the essential truth preached by each? What capacity have I for clearly distinguishing "essential truth?"

How do I value the advantages of eloquence and talent in the preachers of the gospel? Are these more prominent in my mind than the heavenly truths which form the subject of their teaching?

Do I humbly receive the whole gospel truth which is revealed in the scriptures? On what particular points is my mind disposed to revolt against it? What pains do I take to ascertain God's view of that subject? and in what spirit do I submit to it?

Am I one of the called of God? By what testimony do I make my calling and election sure to myself and others? To whom do I attribute the merit and praise of those good things in me, which may be calculated to afford this testimony?

THE PRAYER.

Merciful God, who hast commissioned thy servants to go into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature; grant that one and the same Spirit may work in all whom thou hast sent, so that there may be no strife between them, nor among thy people. Have mercy, I beseech thee, and heal the many divisions which at this time disturb thy church. Turn the eyes of thy servants to the cross of the Lord Jesus, and make them to lose the engrossing sense of lesser things, by contemplating that greatest and first of mercies. Preserve me, I beseech thee, in the simplicity of gospel truth; and grant that I may love that ministry which sets forth Christ crucified, more than all the splendid efforts of talent and eloquence with which that truth may be at any time preached; enable me to humble my mind, so that lying at the foot of the cross, it may receive the wondrous things which of itself it could never imagine or understand. Lead me ever to the law and to the testimony; and grant me heavenly light by which to read its doctrines and its precepts, and a ready will to submit to all that thou requirest. Seal me, O God, by thy Holy Spirit, and leave the impression of thy dear Son's image on my heart; so that it may be seen in my life, and that I may make my calling and election sure, by the manifestation of Christ as my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, and my redemption, to whom be all glory, now and for ever. AMEN.

THIRD PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS II.

INDEX WORDS.		
Paul's preaching	II	And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.
The one object	2	FOR I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
	3	AND I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in
	4	much trembling. AND my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing [or, *persuasible*] words of man's wisdom,
	5	BUT in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:
why?		THAT your faith should not stand [*be*] in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.
Yet speak wisdom	6	HOWBEIT we speak wisdom
to whom?		among them that are perfect:
kind of wisdom		YET not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:
	7	BUT we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world
one object		unto our glory:
from whom hidden?	8	which none of the princes of this world knew:
		FOR had they known *it*, they would not have
	9	crucified the Lord of glory. BUT as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,
		the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.
to whom shewn?	10	BUT God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit:
by Whom?		FOR the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.
	11	FOR what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? EVEN SO the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.
	12	NOW we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God;
what known?		THAT we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.
communicated	13	Which things also we speak,
		not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing
to whom?		spiritual things with spiritual.

who ignorant ? | 14 BUT the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*,

why? | because they are spiritually discerned.

15 BUT he that is spiritual judgeth [or *discerneth*,] all things, yet he himself is judged [or, *discerned*] of no man.

16 FOR who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may [*shall*] instruct him ?
BUT we have the mind of Christ.

EXPLANATION.

After his general statement of the power of the preaching of the cross as contrasted with the insufficiency of the wisdom of this world, St. Paul proceeds to shew that his own conduct had been conformable to these principles. When he first preached the gospel at Corinth, he had not made any attempt to win them by any careful attention to his manner of preaching, or of arguing with them, in setting before them the truths which God himself testified. His fixed purpose had been, not to be drawn aside by any thing while he was with them, but to occupy himself only concerning Jesus Christ—even Him who had humbled himself to the death upon the cross. This was the one doctrine he set forth, in spite of the offence that it caused to those amongst whom he proclaimed it. (Acts xviii. 4—6.) While he continued at Corinth, he had felt conscious of his own insufficiency, and experienced that awe and diffidence which naturally belonged to one so weak. Yet having to execute so great a commission, he had not arranged his instructions, nor studied his discourses, so as to employ the persuasive attractions of human eloquence; but the Holy Spirit had given evident proofs that He himself had accompanied the teaching, and made it the instrument of his power. This had been his course, in order that in believing that which he preached, their faith should not be built upon the talents or arguments of men, but upon the power of God himself.

The apostle had spoken of "the foolishness of preaching," when contrasting its power with the weakness of the wisdom of the world; now however he guards that expression, lest it should be misunderstood as acknowledging that the gospel might really be considered as

folly, or that its preachers were not capable of employing wisdom in argument. He proceeds therefore to assert, that those who preached the gospel *did* explain its doctrines with true wisdom, when conversing with persons who, having been led by the Spirit to receive the truth in its simplicity, had so grown in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they had advanced to maturity in christian life. Not indeed with such wisdom as in that age of boasted philosophy, was considered to be wise—nor with such as was approved of by those in worldly power, whose devices came to nothing. Far from it; the wisdom, which the preachers of the gospel employed, was that which was imparted by God himself. This wisdom of God, which the gospel plan of salvation contained, had been kept secret—hidden in a mystery under the old dispensation. Yet it was the counsel of God, planned and pre-arranged before the foundation of the world, and including in its object the glorification of his saints in the final result of the whole. Though this mystery was to be found in the types of the Jewish dispensation, yet not one of the rulers of the Jews in that age was acquainted with it: if they had possessed any knowledge of that mystery, they would not have procured the crucifixion of Him, who was the very Messiah, the Lord of glory. What was written in the prophecy of Isaiah might be applied to the ignorance and blindness, under which the Jewish and Roman rulers had completed that great sacrifice. When the prophet was earnestly calling upon God to hasten the great consummation (including that glory of the saints just alluded to, which is to be accomplished in the final revelation of this mystery), he thus spoke of the manner in which men would be ignorant of this glory: "Since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." (Isa. lxiv. 1—4.) The apostle referred to this passage of Isaiah, in order to shew that (whilst it applied to the chief priests and rulers of the Jews, who had blindly crucified the Lord of glory from their ignorance of the hidden mystery of God's wisdom, yet) the preachers of the gospel were able to tell of this wisdom while

conversing with the more advanced christians, because God himself had been pleased to withdraw the veil which concealed from the eyes of his own people the knowledge of that wonderful glory, prepared for them that love him; and which, until then, no eye had seen, nor ear had heard, and the thought of which no heart had conceived. This revelation was made to the true people of Christ by the Third Person in the blessed Trinity—that Holy Spirit, who has the most comprehensive and profound knowledge of everything, even including the most hidden designs of the Father. We could never have known this wisdom of God, but by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. How can one man become acquainted even with what was passing within another man? this can only be discerned by the man's own spirit. Just so in this greater knowledge; no one could possibly know the plans and purposes of God—none but his own Spirit can do that. But true christians have received that very Spirit of God, "whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) They do not receive a worldly spirit, but God's Holy Spirit himself; who, knowing "even the deep things of God," communicates to us the knowledge of that glorious inheritance, which by the free grace of God is bestowed upon us.

Having shewn how the capacity of understanding this wisdom of God is obtained, the apostle returns to the point from which he started. It was on the revelation of these glorious things which they conversed with maturer christians, not (as he had already said) in the language of human wisdom, but in the words taught by the Holy Ghost—unfolding and explaining (as the Greek word may here more properly be rendered, than by the word "comparing") these spiritual things to those spiritual persons whom he had before described as "them that are perfect." It would be in vain to attempt to communicate these things to any other than these; because a man in his natural state does not comprehend the things of the Spirit of God (as he had just shewn, verse 11). They do not appear to him as being according to wisdom, but rather the reverse—he cannot understand their force and power, because they require to be perceived in a spiritual manner. A person who is under the influence of the Holy Spirit *is* able to

discern all that is revealed of this hidden wisdom of God; yet none who are not under that influence can discern his motives, so as to judge rightly of his conduct. For as Isaiah says, with reference to the point already stated, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him?" (Isa. xl. 13); and as christians possess that Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, which reveals his mind to them, none but their fellow-christians are able to discern and know that which is within them.

APPLICATION.

9. The apostle's state of mind, as expressed in the former part of this portion, affords a beautiful example of humility, and an absence of self-confidence combined with great gifts and high spiritual attainments. The especial danger which attends a consciousness of spiritual powers, whether ordinary or ministerial, is that the instrumentality of personal talents or acquirements becomes mixed up in the mind with the manifestation of spiritual life; and by degrees they obtain a larger share of attention than is consistent with a due estimate of our own unworthiness, and a just sense of God's gracious mercy towards us. The exercise of gifts, successfully employed for God's glory, opens the way for a natural confidence in their power, quite distinct from a faithful dependence on God's grace, in continuing the mercy he has already freely shewn towards us. And the feeling of personal weakness grows fainter, and perhaps ceases—holy fear and trembling gives way to a boldness, which in its degree, robs God of his glory. Such a state must be attended with deadening effects upon our personal spirituality, even if it does not so grieve the Spirit as to lead to some withdrawal of his influence, and some consequent fall, by means of which the heart is humbled, and taught to walk more watchfully for the future. Paul however stands forth as a bright example of the manner in which the greatest gifts and powers may be possessed, in connection with personal humility, and self-abasement. This properly belongs to, and springs from, a just estimate of our personal unworthiness, and of our unfitness for the high office of shewing forth God's praise in the midst of a world where He is not known.

The apostle went to Corinth full of ardent zeal and confidence in his Master, which the shameful treatment he had recently received at Philippi and at Thessalonica had left unshaken. He had also just experienced the way in which his plain-spoken doctrine of the resurrection of the dead had excited the mockery of the learned Athenians (Acts xvii. 31, 32. 1 Thess. ii. 2.) Yet he adopted no new form of "excellency of speech, or of wisdom," according to his natural judgment; neither did the former success of his preaching lessen his conviction of his own weakness, nor prevent him from trembling, as he contemplated the greatness of the work to be achieved, compared with his own unfitness and infirmities. These, on the contrary, seemed to become more manifest, in proportion as the success of his mission became more decided; and the brightness of the glory of Christ in his work may be said to appear more intense from the contrasted weakness through which it beamed, as through a frame. (2 Cor. xii. 9.) Our grace never appears more heavenly than when it is seen in our conduct, which, at the same time, conveys an impression that whilst doing God's work, we are "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."

10. Worldly persons imagine that the hopes and expectations of spiritual christians are foolish, and their doctrines unreasonable. Why it is that they think thus, has been referred to in the last portion; but it was there stated in connexion with the incapacity of the worldly to comprehend that "foolishness of God," which is "wiser than men." In the present portion, the true wisdom of the doctrines themselves is maintained. When considered with a competent judgment, they are found to be supremely wise—far above the highest notion of human wisdom. The gospel is a plan by which God can be "faithful and just to forgive us our sins," because it enables him to be "just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." They who, having been taught of God, have advanced (in spite of the retarding and corrupting influence of the flesh) to some knowledge of this plan, are able to perceive at every step fresh wonders of wisdom in it: and even angelic beings who are watching

its development amongst men, are gaining thereby a deeper insight into that great attribute of the Divine Being; since "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.) The utmost expansion of man's intellect cannot enable him to measure the length and breadth of the plan of the gospel; and because the most learned amongst men fail in this, they treat it with contempt, and where opportunity occurs, oppose it with violence; as did the princes of this world when they crucified the Lord of glory. But the uninstructed man, who has learned only Christ, finds that Saviour "made unto him wisdom;" so that his mind, enlarged by the Holy Spirit, can embrace an intelligent perception of truths, of which no arguments could convince "the disputer of this world." Faith seems to expand his faculties; in gazing at the mysteries to which he has humbly submitted his understanding, many of them grow less mysterious, and begin to be comprehended, as well as believed. And as one and another seem to come within the reach of reason, faith grows stronger and more confidently lays hold of those revealed truths, which still lie beyond the limit prescribed for our present condition; and longs more fervently for the time when we shall know, even as we are known.

11. This passage contains one of the strongest statements concerning the indwelling of the Holy Spirit with true believers. This doctrine is one of those against which the wisdom of the world especially revolts. It is a doctrine purely of revelation—it could never have been conceived by unassisted reason; and is classed by multitudes as amongst the foolishness of fanatics. Yet it is written, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. viii. 9); and this truth forms the ground upon which the apostle argues in this portion, and in such a manner that, if it were not true, there would be no force or truth in his argument. A christian is taught to know that his "body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in him, which he has of God, and he is not his own." (1 Cor. vi. 19.) He acts upon this knowledge, and strives

diligently to work out his own salvation with a solemn reverence—a fear and trembling—under the conviction that "it is God which worketh in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) Every living man has one spirit in his body, which is his own, and constitutes *himself;* but every true christian may be said to have two spirits in his body—that which constitutes himself, and besides, the Spirit of God is in him, influencing, drawing, directing, ruling his own spirit; which is made willing to submit to this divine superintendence, without however losing either its personal identity, or its freedom of will. This great mystery is "foolishness" to the world; but it is "the foolishness of God," and those who are the subjects of it, discover by degrees that it is "wiser than men." They learn to comprehend the practical result, though they cannot understand the manner of operation. The wise ones of the world can do no more than this with respect to their own spirits. A man's body without his spirit would be dead—this he knows practically by every act of his life; he is sensible that he possesses a spirit, but he cannot tell the manner of its operation upon his body, any more than a true christian can explain the mode by which the Holy Spirit in him acts upon his own spirit. Yet that the Holy Spirit does so act, is the source of all his wisdom; by this we are able to discern spiritual things, and to "judge all things," because in possessing the Holy Ghost, "we have the mind of Christ." And as the body without a man's spirit is under the power of the first death, so if a man in his fallen state be without the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, his spirit is under the power of the second death. (Rev. xx. 6, 14.)

12. One of the results of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in any person is, that God conveys to his mind a lively impression of the things that are prepared for them that love him. These things are beyond the conception of man in his natural state, as they have never been within the range of his experience. And yet such an apprehension of the essential happiness may be imparted, as may influence the heart earnestly to desire and diligently to prepare for it. This is one of the high privileges of a

spiritual christian. He is permitted to know the glory that is to be revealed at "the manifestation of the sons of God;" he learns at first enough of this to lead him to search more and more into the scriptures, and he finds increasing glory and increasing capacity to comprehend the revelation of it. The affections are thus more firmly set on things above, and more effectually removed from the things on the earth; and the power to resist the temptations, that derive their force from the influence of the things of the world, becomes stronger, in proportion as the christian becomes more capable of realizing the things that God has prepared for them that love him. The glorious anticipation of the kingdom of Christ's glory, in which his saints are to partake, is set forth in scripture as one great motive for practical holiness; and perhaps no motive operates more effectually when it has taken root in the heart.

QUESTIONS.

What effect has been produced in me by the habit of finding God's grace sufficient for my great need? Have I thought less of my own weakness, as God's strength has been afforded me? or do I feel more of my need as I see more of the greatness of God's help?

What spiritual truths can I now perceive to be reasonable and wise, which I once considered to be inconsistent with reason? What doctrines do I understand now which I once looked upon as incomprehensible? What other proof have I that I am growing more mature in spiritual knowledge?

Can I say that my "body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in me?" If I cannot, what hope for eternity do I draw from the scriptures? If I can, how do I manifest that it is God that worketh in me both to will and to do of his good pleasure?

What are my anticipations of the future blessedness of those who truly love God? Are they scriptural? What effect do they produce in my life? Do they strengthen me in my contest against sin? Do they encourage me in my efforts after holiness?

THE PRAYER.

Thou holy God, who requirest holiness in thy people, and workest in them to will and to do of thy good pleasure, pardon my sins, I implore thee, and make me sensible of thy free mercy in receiving me graciously, in spite of my exceeding sinfulness. Thou hast supported me hitherto, and manifested thy strength in my weakness. I am in fear, and in trembling when I consider my own unworthiness; make me to be strong and courageous in the confidence of thy help upon every opportunity of shewing forth thy praise before the world. Make me to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, that receiving grace for grace, and proceeding from strength to strength, I may go on unto perfection, ever striving at higher spiritual attainments, and deeper views of thy wisdom and love, until I enter into the capacity of the complete adoption, even the redemption of the body. Give me thy Holy Spirit in larger measure. Fill me, O God, out of the fulness that is in Christ. Enable me to realize with holy reverence the wonderful honour that thou puttest upon me, by dwelling within me. Direct my thoughts—purify my affections—sway my will. Inform me concerning the mind of Christ; dispose me to a perfect conformity thereto. Reveal to me the wondrous things thou hast prepared for them that love thee; and teach me how to discern them in thy Holy Scriptures. Give me simplicity of faith concerning them, that I may realize them as substantial, though yet but hoped for; and while I long for perfect consummation and bliss in thy everlasting glory, enable me to prove that my affections are set upon things in heaven, by using the things that are on earth only to the glory of thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

FOURTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS III.

In order to render the references implied in the indentation more clear, previous passages are introduced (by the mention of the opening words); so that the connexion of the Apostle's whole argument may be more plainly perceived at one view.

I.
10-31 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name, &c.
II.
1-5 And I, brethren, when I came to you, &c.
6-16 Howbeit we speak wisdom among, &c.

INDEX WORDS.

III.

Not treat them as the "perfect"

1 AND I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in
2 Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat:

why

FOR hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

3 FOR ye are yet carnal: FOR WHEREAS *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions [or, *factions*], are ye not carnal, and walk as men?
4 [*according to man.*] FOR while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Ministers, God's instruments

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord
6 gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos
7 watered; but God gave the increase. SO THEN neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

All one

8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one:

each rewarded

AND every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

9 FOR we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry [or, *tillage*],

God's building

ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

[illegible]

11 FOR other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

the superstructure — 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

the proof of it — 13 every man's work shall be made manifest: FOR the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed [*is revealed*] by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

the result—gain — 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

or loss — 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

the building-what — 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile [or, *destroy*] the temple of God, him shall God destroy; FOR the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

applied to their state — 18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him

19 become a fool, that he may be wise. FOR the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. FOR it is written, "He taketh the wise in their own

20 craftiness." AND AGAIN, "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."

21 THEREFORE let no man glory in men. FOR all

22 things are your's; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's;

23 AND ye are Christ's, and Christ *is* God's.

EXPLANATION.

The apostle had spoken of the qualification needed for understanding that divine wisdom of the gospel, which he put forth upon fitting occasions (ii. 6—16); and he proceeds to state, why it was that he had not done this, in first bringing that gospel amongst them. The "spiritual things," which he was able and willing to explain to "spiritual" persons (ii. 13; see page 26), he could not have set before them when he preached to them at Corinth; because they were not yet in the spiritual condition which was required in order to understand them. He was under the necessity of speaking to them as unconverted persons in a fleshly condition; and after having received the gospel, he could only deal with them as with new-born infants in spiritual matters. He instructed them in the simplest fundamental truths adapted to their capacity, just as infants are fed with milk; not putting before them those doctrines of deeper wisdom, which would have been

like giving meat to babes, and requiring a degree of spiritual discernment for which they were not sufficiently matured. He had considered them as carnally-minded; in fact it was evident that they continued to be so, and were therefore still incapable of receiving the higher instructions of christian wisdom. Was not this clearly the case, when the many divisions and factions among them engendered the bitterness of party spirit, and when their conduct was according to the fashion and spirit of mere men of the world? Was not their separation into the followers of some particular minister (each crying, 'I belong to Paul,' 'I belong to Apollos'), an evidence of their being still carnal, rather than spiritual persons? Paul and Apollos were but servants of the Lord, by whom He was pleased to work in conveying to them the gospel-message (Eph. ii. 8); and blessing the instrumentality of each minister to the conversion of individuals, some by one, and some by another. And so also in the progress of every christian's spiritual life, different ministers are employed in different stages of the work. Comparing the whole ministerial work to the ordinary operations of husbandry, Paul says that he was the person who planted the seed, and that Apollos was the labourer who followed and watered it when it was in the earth, but it was God who gave it the power to increase and produce fruit; and thus neither the servant who was the instrument of planting the seed, nor he who was employed in watering it, are to be considered as having any claim to praise in producing the effect; but God alone, whose power brought forth the fruit. The various agents by whose instrumentality the different stages of the work are performed, must be considered as all the same thing, all servants of one and the same master, all occupied in carrying on one and the same work. While however this is the case as regards the object of the work, each individual minister shall have his gracious reward with reference to his exertions in the particular work in which it pleased God to employ him. For it is God who employs his ministers, sets them to work together, and works with them Himself; and the flock gathered by them are (according to this agricultural comparison) the tillage and fruit of the labour.

Then the Apostle changes the metaphor by which he was explaining the subject to the Corinthian christians, and laying aside the comparison of husbandry, he adopts that of architecture. He compares the christians at Corinth to a building belonging to God, and constructed under his direction. He compares himself to an experienced architect who had laid the foundation; after which another had taken up the work, and added the superstructure. He warned every such builder, to be very careful in what manner he raised the building. There is but one foundation that can be laid for God's building, even Jesus Christ; no minister of God can build upon any other. It has once been effectually laid as the "precious corner stone, the sure foundation" (Isa. xxviii. 16. Matt. xxi. 42. 1 Pet. ii. 4—8); and Paul had himself laid that "living stone" as the foundation of the Church at Corinth. It remained to be seen, what was the nature of the superstructure which other ministers had built upon this foundation. The Lord Jesus himself being compared to the principal supporting stone of the building, some persons might be added to the church, who would be like durable and valuable materials, such as gold, silver, and costly marble; and others might be added, who could only be compared to perishable and combustible materials, such as wood, and thatch of hay, or straw. The nature of the added material would be proved, if the house thus built were set on fire:—the marble, the silver, and the gold would withstand the fire and remain; whereas the wood and the thatch would be consumed. Even so if the fiery trial of persecution should arise, the faith of individual professors will be tested: those who had been added as "living stones" upon the precious corner stone once laid, will abide through the fiery trial that is to try them, and maintain their profession of Christ's truth even to the end: whereas those who had joined the church merely from the powerful influence of some particular teacher, and who for a time seemed to form part of the building raised upon the true foundation, will desert the cause they once promoted, and shrinking from the troubles and distresses that the others endure faithfully, will fall away and perish.

It is thus that the ministerial labours of every servant of God was to be put to the proof in order that their results may plainly appear; such fire must be permitted to test them—persecution, distress, privation, must arise "because of the word," in order that the sincerity of every professing christian may be plainly seen when the time of trial comes, and the work of the minister may be known to be what it really is. Some of those who were made disciples and instructed by each several teacher, will turn out to be truly taught of the Spirit, and will pass through the trial, just as gold, or silver, or valuable marble in a building would resist the power of fire: while others will shew that they prefer this present world, and their faith will be seen to be no effectual faith, by their returning to those ways of the world that are opposed to the word of God; just as a wooden tenement covered with thatch would be consumed by the flames. The day of heat will thus shew plainly, what sort of christian each convert is.

When Paul was employing the previous metaphor of the husbandry, he had stated that, though all the servants of the one Lord were but as one, yet the reward of each should have reference to the result of the work on which each was separately employed (verse 8); and now he carries on the comparison of the building, still further to explain that point. He says that it is the continuance of the building, raised by each upon the foundation living stone, after being tested by fire, that will decide the measure of the reward graciously given to each of the builders. If the souls apparently gathered to Christ by any minister, being outwardly connected with his church on earth, manifest the reality of their spiritual union with their divine Head, and remain unmoved in the day of fiery trial which is to try them, that minister shall receive a reward. The Apostle had implied this in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, when he said that the christian converts there were his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20, see page 20, of the Guide to that Epistle); and here he states the doctrine plainly, and makes his statement more emphatic by the contrast

of the opposite result which he also states. If after all the minister's labour in making disciples to christian truth, those whom he had thus gathered should turn out to be false-hearted, or self-deceived unspiritual professors, not really joined to Christ by the Holy Spirit, and so incapable of resisting the severe trial to which their faith may be exposed; the minister by whom they were added to the church will suffer the loss of that reward, which had been his "hope," and "joy," in anticipation of finding them in his "crown of rejoicing;"—just as the builder, whose edifice was constructed of wood and thatch, would have laboured in vain, if it had caught fire and was consumed. This might not affect his own personal salvation, but it would assuredly lessen his eternal reward; just as a man, whose house was burnt down, would suffer great loss, even though he escaped with his life. His error in the selection of the materials with which to build upon the "tried foundation stone," might not prove that he himself was unspiritual or false; and if so, would not deprive him of the salvation that is in Christ. Yet the very painful disappointment produced in the minister's heart by the apostacy of those whom he had regarded as his children, will be to him like an escape from fire.

Then the apostle turns from the builders to the building; and asks the Corinthians, whether they do not remember that the body of christians at Corinth form the "building of God" referred to in this metaphor—no less glorious a building than the temple of God himself, in which the Spirit of God was pleased to dwell; really abiding with many of the members, while all professed to possess Him. The mixture of bad and perishable materials would lead to the destruction of a building:—the mixture of false and faithless professors with the spiritual members of Christ, would lead to the removing of the true church from amongst them. Therefore if any person, by corrupting the spiritual oneness of the church, thus prepared the way for its destruction, that person God would give to destruction: (the same word is repeated in the Greek, although in the English it is translated "defile" on the first occasion, and "destroy" on the second). The temple of God—his spiritual church—is a holy building, separated

and set apart for God. The christians at Corinth were such. Each individual therefore must be careful not to be self-deceived. If any one had a character for wisdom (according to the sense in which the world consider a man to be wise), he must be ready to forego that reputation, and expose himself to the charge of being a fool, in order that he may become partaker of true wisdom;—remembering that what is esteemed wise by the world in its efforts at knowing God, is but folly with God. The apostle had already more fully explained this in a former part of the epistle (i. 18—31; see page 15), and now he confirms the argument by a reference to the Scriptures. It is written in the book of Job, "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (Job v. 13); and it is also written in the book of Psalms, "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vanity." (Psa. xciv. 11.) Having added this divine testimony to his former arguments, the apostle winds up the subject by applying this part of it to the point with which he opened his letter; warning the Corinthians that no one of them should pride himself in following any minister, nor make any boast of the powers of man. All the gifts and powers exercised by every minister, were bestowed for their benefit as the people of God. Nay all things, in the ordering of providential, as well as ministerial arrangements, were directed with reference to *them* as Christ's church, so that every thing might be said to be *theirs*. Paul, Apollos, Peter (see John i. 42), all ministers of the gospel, were appointed for the gathering of the church, and therefore belonged to the church: —the world with its trials, purifying the Lord's people whether by death or in life, is maintained and tolerated in its course for that purpose, and as a sphere in which christians are matured, and therefore it is *theirs*:—the present events through which the church is militant, and the future glory in which it will be triumphant, all belong to the church, and the church belongs to Christ, and Christ is of God.

APPLICATION.

Applications Nos. 4, 5, and 6, may be considered with reference to some statements in the present portion.

13. This passage of Scripture comprehends a view of the relative position of the christian minister towards the people to whom he preaches. It is one of especial interest in this respect, and abounds with points of great importance for practical application, besides those above referred to, which might have been repeated, although already drawn from former portions of this epistle. The comparative nothingness of the instruments employed by God in planting or watering the divine seed in any heart, stands prominently as a warning to christians. The gospel is preached by the Lord's appointed servants. He sends them forth, and He is with them; the object of their preaching is to make men have direct communion with Him; to stir them up to holy diligence in His service; and to humble them at the foot of the cross, in order that they may enter into such intercourse with Him, as may fit them for the eternal state of glory which He has prepared for His people. To do this, the Spirit of God works in our hearts. There is a struggle of the flesh against the Spirit; but when the Spirit is mercifully making progress in us, He draws us more and more to the revealed will of God, making us more attentive to the gospel as preached by His servants. Thus the ministry of God's word becomes profitable to the soul. Satan sees this, sees that men are being drawn to God by the preaching of His word: and then he comes and whispers to the soul, "now you need not be anxious; you cannot be under a better minister than you have; attend to him, and follow him, and you will be sure to be right." Satan's object in doing this is to make the minister to be something of importance, and to encourage the heart to rest in his ministrations; and presently he is made to stand up as a screen between us and God. Naturally we are willing to hear any thing, or do any thing, in order to avoid coming into close contact with God. Then comes our natural slothfulness in aid of the other principle: as long as something can be kept between us and God, it is so easy and comfortable to rest upon another for settling our spiritual state, that by degrees Satan gets the soul to sit down quietly, and take whatever is taught as true, just because the minister says it; thus in fact secretly making a minister the all-important

something, instead of the instrumental nothing. But a sermon is not in reality done with, when the preaching is over. The part of those who hear, is to take the words and bring them before God in earnest prayer, and to search in the Bible whether they are indeed His words; to sit apart as it were with God, and to ask Him to imprint upon our heart all that was true in the sermon; to try and make it profitable to our soul, by examining our own interest in its truth without reference to its delivery. A sermon thus received, and acted upon, brings us into close contact and direct intercourse with God, and leaves the instrument in his right position.

14. The entire supremacy of God, both in his directing power over the instruments by whom he condescends to work, and also in the results which follow, is strongly stated in this portion. The comparison of husbandry is a very common one in the New Testament. It is found in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, of the Sower and the Seed, of the Vineyard let out to Husbandmen; and in many other passages. As the comparison stands in this portion, God is considered as the great husbandman who owns the land; he possesses all the materials for carrying on the tillage, all the implements that are necessary, and all the servants who are to work; he furnishes out of his plenteous storehouses the seed to be sown on the farm. He hires the labourers and pays them, appoints them their work in the different parts of his great tillage, watches over them, and sees how each labourer does his allotted portion of the work; He directs the labour of the whole farm. Beyond this no man, no earthly farmer can go; beyond this the comparison will not hold good. No man can call the rain down from heaven to moisten the earth, and to cause the seed to shoot forth and spring up: neither can man call the sun to shine and ripen the corn when it has sprung up. But God can do this, besides all the rest. Consider what part the labourer has to do in the farm, under such a master: he ploughs the ground, and he sows the seed as he is directed; but he has no power to make it grow. Who would say that a labourer should have the praise of a good crop, just because for a short

season he worked upon that land? On the other hand, if the crop failed, and no corn ripened or came to perfection, who would blame the labourer for it, and say, "Here is no crop, because such a one worked on the farm?" The ministers of Christ are "labourers together with God;" God alone can give the seed, and the power to sow it, or send the sun and the rain, to cause that which is sown at His command to spring up and to grow. This thought should excite us to a diligent spirit of self-examination, to see in what way we receive the preaching of the gospel. Through what channel are we looking for the blessing? Whence do we expect the increase? A habit of bringing before God in prayer every thing that is taught, and of watchful self-application as in the presence of God, is a means of overcoming our unwillingness to come into the presence of God, and brings us into communion with him. It overcomes the slothfulness of man as regards spiritual matters; it excites us to diligence in self-examination, and to searching of the Scriptures as in the presence of God. And it also corrects our pride; for as soon as we begin really to look into our own hearts, and bring them to the test of God's word, we find out that after all we are but poor unprofitable servants, and without the possibility of other hope than that afforded by the free mercy of God. These results will soon enable us to partake of the blessings, which the minister is the appointed means of imparting; thankfully and humbly to receive his instructions, while we acknowledge that all the blessing comes from God; that "it is God that giveth the increase."

15. The slothful heart will not take the trouble to search the word of God for itself; it is bound hand and foot to the teaching of a *man*, and so makes the Paul, or the Apollos, or the Cephas, to be every thing: while, on the other hand, the proud will not submit to have the true nature of sin, and the evils of their own sins, plainly laid bare; and the consequence is, they reject some preaching, and rebel against it, under cover of its being the mere opinion of a man. Satan also varies his snares with another device, not indeed so low or so plainly wrong, as the open rebellion produced by pride, but not less

dangerous to the soul in its results; a device by which he leads people into the snare of looking to the preacher, rather than to his doctrine, as *characterizing the Gospel.* Not that they are led to attach too much importance to the ministers in general, but rather to select one minister out of many, as their own favourite preacher; receiving the Gospel as *he* preaches it, and so deceiving themselves with the notion that they are religious, because they are followers of this or that particular man, forgetting that he is but *one* out of many of the ministers of Christ, who are all servants, labouring in the one Gospel. There are many persons who think they receive the Gospel in all sincerity, and consider themselves religious, because they are glad when particular parts are brought before them. They find some ministers who mainly dwell upon certain points only, and who seem to leave out certain parts, which do not suit with their notions. On the other hand, they find a minister who brings forward doctrine, which they consider as going too far; because it condemns certain practices in which they see no harm. And so they make a choice between a Paul, a Cephas, and an Apollos; and reject the word of God, when it comes home too closely to their hearts. The Apostle says, in the beginning of the chapter, that he could not speak unto the Corinthians "as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (v. 1, 4.) Then, having shewn that the minister, whether Paul or Apollos, is nothing, he goes on to manifest the error of placing one minister in opposition to another; and says (verse 8), "He that planteth and he that watereth are one;" all are alike labourers in Christ's Gospel, which is one and the same. As all Christ's ministers are but His instruments, and as the work is entirely of God who alone can give the increase, the only safe way to make use of the ministry, is to lay aside altogether any comparison as to difference between one instrument and another; and to receive the truth simply, *because* Jesus sends it to us, and *as* he sends it. God has put into our hands abundant means of searching in His holy word; and if, when we hear any minister preach, we would try the doctrine diligently by the Scriptures, we

should thereby be brought into close contact with God, and our souls would prosper under the ministry.

16. The change of metaphor from that of the husbandry to the building, affords opportunity for enlarging on some important points, which could not so well have been included in the former comparison. The folly of raising a building without taking heed to the foundation is very plain. In the matter before us "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And this places in its true position, that which is the beginning of the gathering together of God's people so as to form a home or habitation for God. No house can stand without a foundation. Christ is the foundation. He is what the first and master-stone is to a building; that on which all the other stones rest; that which is stronger than all the others, and bears them all up; that which is most solid in itself, and lies closest to the rock upon which it is necessarily laid, having to bear the weight of the whole building; that which in short is the chief stone, the master-support of the whole; this is JESUS CHRIST. Being called *a stone*, Jesus is to be considered as one like the other stones of which the building is composed; that is, He is a man—a brother in the flesh—a partaker of the human nature—one in all things like unto us, sin only excepted. A mistake commonly made in interpreting this portion of Scripture, is to suppose that the foundation means merely the *doctrine* of Jesus Christ. But in this sense the comparison would not be complete. The picture would not be a perfect one, unless the stone chosen for the foundation were one of the same kind as those of which the building is afterwards to be raised. Therefore we look to Jesus Christ, the foundation stone in God's building, as a man—as our brother, now at the right hand of God. God himself chose Christ Jesus to be the foundation; and placed Him in the position of other men, under the law for man, that He might be placed as the foundation of all their hopes. There is at this moment a man in heaven; a man who, being without spot or stain of sin, can on his own account stand before God. And this is the foundation of all our hope, and of all our

peace. Moreover when the Spirit of God says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," He means not only that Christ is the foundation, but the *entire* foundation. The common device of man's heart is to suggest that besides this true foundation, which all are very willing to allege they believe in *as a part* of their dependence, there must be something else of their own laid as low as the foundation, and upon which they may rest a part of their hope of salvation. They will acknowledge Christ *of course;* but then they place their own good works (that is, something as they fancy coming from *themselves*) by the side of Him. They believe in Christ; but then they must contribute something of their own to make their salvation surer. Doubtless we must work, because God requires it; we must be fruitful in good works, because Christ has ordained that His people should walk in them: but all this must be done *upon* the foundation, and must not be put *by the side* of it. But men make as it were an excavation as near as possible to the true foundation, and fill it up with notions of their own works, in order to rest a part of their hope of salvation upon themselves. Now persons who are building in this way will never experience solid peace of conscience here, nor can they in this way enter into rest hereafter. Many persons will very readily take Christ as a Saviour to make up for their own imperfections; and so deceive themselves, and fancy they are building upon the sure foundation, when in fact they are only laying a foundation of their own in connexion with Him. This part of the comparison is calculated to shew the folly of mixing faith and works together as a foundation of our hope. We must work because God commands it: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) But if the thought of our own good works, our amiable lives, or kind-heartedness, or any thing else finds its way into our secret hopes, in connexion with Christ; then we may be assured that, though the foundation of the temple has been laid, we have not yet been rightly built upon it: for Jesus Christ is an entire foundation, and the only one, and he will have nothing laid by the side of Him.

17. Whatever may be the warning applicable to ministers in considering this passage, it cannot but be highly profitable to the people who are gathered into Christ's visible Church through their ministry, to consider attentively the power and purpose of the comparison here employed by the Holy Spirit; in order that they may discover how far each of them belongs to the true building of God, that shall abide in eternal glory. Two classes of materials are spoken of in the metaphor, such as may be distinguished by the test of fire. The first class includes gold, silver, and precious marbles. They are parts of the materials of a magnificent house, and those parts which will bear the action of fire: and the apostle therefore chooses them, to denote the true children of God—those who are born again of the Holy Spirit, and united by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ—those who by His grace are made fitting to stand as materials in His building—who in the whole ordering of their spiritual life are continually led forward by Him; who (as we read Psalm cxliv. 12) "grow up before him as plants, as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." In using this comparison to describe the church of Christ, the apostle further chooses those particular materials that are the most beautiful, valuable, and substantial; by these he would represent to us those persons, who under all circumstances of trial, and temptation, and persecution, are only manifested the more brightly and clearly to be the children of God. Shining as lights in a dark world, having their hope and their affections placed on high, they are hereby proved to be prepared for that better and glorious state of things hereafter, which is infinitely beyond and above every thing they could enjoy in the present state. They are looking for the glory that is to be revealed at the coming of the Lord. They "groan within themselves being burthened;" and their "earnest expectation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." They know that the glory then to be revealed will be surpassing, and will totally eclipse every thing this world can offer them. Thus they live, with their mind and their affection fixed upon Christ and the glories of His kingdom; and when that glorious kingdom shall be fully established, they shall shine as the

precious stones in the completed building; being the glorious gathering together of all God's faithful people. And these valuable and brilliant materials are used to express the true children of God, for another reason:—there is something solid and permanent in the construction of a house, that is to be ornamented and beautified with gold, silver, and valuable marbles: it is not a mere temporary residence; it is not built for the present day only. The most precious materials are chosen, and it is calculated to survive all the accidents to which it may be exposed. We have at once an idea of a house, in the construction of which there is solidity and permanency, as well as beauty and value. And such a building is the church of God: by such characteristics as these therefore we may ascertain our true position in that church.

18. And the other class of materials mentioned affords us an opportunity of ascertaining the same point by contrast. If a person wanted merely a temporary building, just to cover him from the rain, to suit a temporary state of things, and no more; then it would be quite sufficient to put up a light wooden house, and thatch it with straw. When we see a house lightly built of wood, thatched with straw, and with but few, if any, durable and costly materials used in the building, we say at once that it is merely a poor cottage; and it gives us no expectation that the person who built it intended it to endure for any long time: neither do we see anything in its construction to admire—there is no value in the materials used in it. By this class of materials very different sort of persons are brought before us—"wood, hay, stubble"—persons in appearance built upon the foundation, Jesus Christ; not heathen, but persons who make a profession of true religion:—persons who have been baptized into the visible church—who join the congregation of God's people, and are numbered amongst them—persons who stand up and say the creed, and declare their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—and who perhaps attend the communion of the Lord's Supper:—persons in short who acknowledge and consent to the great truths of religion brought before them, which they are told are gathered from the scriptures,

though without taking the trouble to examine for themselves. They have the name of Christ ready upon their tongue; they are tolerably regular in the ordinances of God's house; they exclaim against open wickedness and immorality; but their lives do not at all suit with the excellency of their profession:—they do not shine as lights in the world. They assemble amongst God's true people, and profess their expectation of being justified only by faith in Jesus Christ; while they are secretly trusting to their own good works. While they make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, and think that they make it sincerely, and say they are influenced by spiritual motives, and are living in expectation of the glory that is to be revealed, yet they act in a way which plainly shews that they are living wholly to the world. Their profession of religion saves them from the charge of being infidels and blasphemers, and ensures them a reception in respectable society; for if in the present day, and in this country, a man be a scoffer at religion, or treats it with contempt, no respectable society will cordially receive him; therefore it becomes a matter of advantage, and character, and even of moral necessity, that a man should profess, in some degree, his respect for religion. Such persons therefore think that, being built upon the true foundation, they are a part of God's house or building; but their notion of that building is only a mean erection—a mere temporary shed, to shelter from the rain and wind, as it were, of being charged as irreligious neglectors of God—infidels and blasphemers.

19. The fire spoken of as the fire which "shall try every man's work, of what sort it is," must be an instrumentality to prove the nature of every minister's building. It is such a fire that shall closely test and unveil the nature of his work. The Lord orders or permits circumstances to occur, which prove what sort of profession the people whom the minister is adding to the church (as materials to a building) are making—whether they are polished after the similitude of a palace—shining brightly in the dark world of sin, though the fire burn ever so fiercely around them, only making their graces sparkle

more brilliantly: or on the other hand, whether their profession is a mere name—their notion of the Church a wooden thatched shed—one which, when the fire touches it, is soon consumed, and the place thereof knoweth it no more. Professing christians shall be exposed to trials, and distresses (and persecutions, it may be), which shall bring to the test every minister's work, whether he has used sufficient care with his people. It will be seen, whether he has been satisfied with having delivered the truth to them, and then has allowed them to deceive themselves with a notion that, because they have sat still and heard, therefore they are christians;—or whether he will not let them settle down and rest in error, but tries by every means to make the word reach home to the heart personally. It will be seen whether their profession be true, real, and duly weighed in the mind, and embraced with a full desire of acting out its principles, as a christian ought to do; or whether it is merely a falsehood, told to the face of God—an empty profession of high and heavenly truths, never duly considered.

In order to ascertain what each of us will prove to be under these trials, we should try ourselves. When we are reproached for the name of Christ—reviled and derided for acting upon our profession, and living according to our own public prayers,—when we are mocked for our overmuch religion, as it is called; how do we bear this? It is a part of the fiery trial which is to try and prove us; does it only more plainly reveal to ourselves that we have a solid ground of comfort, an inward peace that cannot be taken away from us? Or does the trial, on the other hand, make us shrink, give way, and turn from our profession; agreeing to make some compromise with the world? If this be the effect of the fire, it shews clearly that we are only wood, hay, stubble.

20. In order to be able to make a right application of the whole of this important passage, each member of the church should seek to maintain a lively sense of the personal responsibility that belongs to him; so as not to be led into the common error of throwing much of the responsibility upon the minister, in order to avoid the

weight of the burthen. It must be remembered (in adapting the comparison of the building to the visible church), that the builders cannot choose or reject any of the materials: God has not given the discernment of spirits to his ministers. When persons desire to be added to the church, a minister cannot decide whether the profession is true;—whether they mean what they say, or whether they do not mean what they say. No power is given to decide that any professing christian (not living in open sin) is a hypocrite: none dare pronounce this. But what the minister has to do, when persons come and desire to be placed as a part of the materials on the foundation of the church, is to shew them what ought to be the character, and what must be the motives of a real christian: so that they may know clearly, upon what their spiritual church-privileges depend; that it is upon the truth and sincerity of their own profession, and not upon any thing that can be done for them, or externally and officially by them. By perseveringly placing this before them—by laying open to themselves their own profession and acknowledgments—by giving each individual no rest, but urging him by all and every means to search into his own heart, to see whether the words he speaks are really out of the fulness of the good treasure put into his heart by the Holy Spirit of God—by this means the workman carries on his work. By this means the gold, silver, and precious stones (those who in making their profession say only what they mean and feel) are enabled habitually to try and examine themselves; and so are prepared for the fiery trial which will come upon them, that they may be only strengthened and purified in the trial, and not consumed and destroyed. On the other hand, the merely nominal professors—the formal worshippers, who attend to the services merely from custom, and because circumstances seem to require them to be religious—may be enabled to detect for themselves, before the hour of trial comes, the hollowness of their profession; and detecting it, may humble themselves before God: so that, seeing the folly of making an unmeaning profession, they may heartily enter into the earnestness and spirituality of that which the church justly and wisely requires them to make. To

lead the people to this is the object of a faithful minister. His work will be so to conduct the ministry of the word—so to press home to each person's conscience the meaning of his own profession—that self-deceived persons, and formalists, and hypocrites, may get out of the way; that they may see, by *the very words* of their own declaration, they do not belong to God; and that knowing they ought not to say what they do not feel, they may honestly retire of their own accord, and not spoil and mar the beauty of God's glorious building. Or else, that finding their own profession to be indeed a weighty matter, and seeing that they cannot live consistently with it without being true spiritual members of Christ's church, they may come to God in all sincerity of heart, entering into the full meaning of every part of what they say. Then they will be placed as firm, true, solid, and glorious materials upon the foundation; they will be prepared for the trial, and, whensoever it comes, will shine brightly in it.

21. These applications of the passage would be very deficient, if they did not teach us to consider the relationship, lasting throughout eternity, between the minister and that part of his charge which abides, who are proved in the trial by fire to be the gold, silver, precious marbles—the enduring materials of the spiritual temple of God. According to this abiding portion of the work *built upon the foundation*, each builder is to "receive a reward." It is not however to be a reward of wages, but one of encouragement—not given because it was earned, but out of the free love of Him who employs his ministers. We shall find this reward more largely referred to, in the ninth chapter of this epistle. (1 Cor. ix. 16—23.) The minister must perform his work; at the peril of his own soul, whether there were a reward or not, the minister must preach the gospel. If he do it willingly, he has the reward, not as so much wages given for so much work done; but as a free gift. God has commanded His gospel to be preached, and it must be done; if the heart of His ministers be made willing to do it, and they do it cheerfully, then a reward is given. But what is the reward? The apostle speaks of it in his first epistle to the Thessa-

lonians. (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.) "What is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." Again, he says of his converts to the Lord, "ye are our rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus." (2 Cor. i. 14.) We are told in Dan. xii. 3, that "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Their reward is to be according to the number of souls they shall have gathered and placed upon the true foundation—who have been tried in the fire, and have borne it; and have proved in the end to be gold, silver, and precious stones, solid, enduring, and glorious. The Lord sends His ministers forth into the world. He says, go and gather souls into the church by the preaching of my gospel—build them upon the foundation, and "lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." He adds, take care *how* you do this, be very earnest and diligent; and as many souls as you can gather into the church by a true profession, such as turn out, in the fiery trial which shall come upon them, to be really built upon the foundation, and cemented to it by the Holy Ghost; these shall be a crown for you, with which you shall shine brightly for evermore.

22. But there is also in this passage a fearful contrast to the gracious reward held out to encourage Christ's ministers: there is the case in which they are to suffer loss. If after a minister has been labouring diligently to put the truth before his people—if after he has shewn them the folly of mocking God, by making an unmeant and unfelt profession; and has pressed upon their consciences the powerful meaning of the words they themselves make use of, and the inconsistency of not striving to live after the measure of their own statements:—if, after he has done all this, any members of the Church go forth to the fiery trial that is sent to try the sincerity of their profession, and by their acts deny their words;—if any one declares with his lips the power and readiness of Christ to redeem him from all sin, but under temptation says, "I cannot help giving way to this sin—I must follow that wrong

course or worldly custom—I shall lose so much if I do not; —I know it is contrary to my profession made in Church —I know my baptismal vow is to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh—I know that, to be consistent with that vow and promise, I must deny myself in this matter, and take up my cross and follow Christ; but then I cannot—the profession is very good, and I wish I could act up to it, but I cannot:"—such a one fails in the trial—he clearly proves, that he is "wood, hay, stubble." All the minister's work upon such a one has been in vain—it is burnt up—it does not "abide"—the minister "suffers loss,"—the loss of a jewel; that soul will never appear as a jewel in his crown. Such a one might have gone on for a long time making his profession, before the time of trial came—deceiving himself with a lie in his right hand—walking about the world with the name and profession of a christian; while nevertheless Satan had surely the dominion over him. This loss to the minister will not indeed be the loss of his own soul; but it is one that tries a pastor's heart the most severely. He watches—he mourns—he prays—he weeps over such unhappy souls; they are lost from his crown. But it is the very fire by which the Lord is purifying and proving his own heart; and though he loses his jewels, his own soul is saved, so as by fire. There are always to be found professing christians who, so long as things go smoothly with them, seem to do well; who are regular in their attendance upon ordinances, and will agree to any thing short of self-denying consistency. For a minister to know of such persons amongst the members of his church; and to find that, when the fiery trial comes to them, they give way and fall into sin; and then to feel that not only will they perish themselves, but also that a jewel is taken out of his own crown—one that he had hoped and prayed for, but which is now in the possession of Satan—this is indeed a fiery trial—a trial such as none but a minister can know. The anticipation of such a reward and the fear of such a loss, makes the connexion between a minister and his people to be most intimate and interesting.

23. The comprehensive statement, at the end of this

portion, declares that all things of every kind in this world are for the sake of the true people of God. It requires a faithful humility to be able to receive this great truth as becomes a christian. It is the Lord's purpose to gather out of every part of the world a people for his name and for his glory, in the future dispensation of the restitution of all things; and while this gathering is going on, that same Lord makes all things work together for the good of each and all of those persons, who shall hereafter be partakers of that glory. Thus all things belong to them; and there needs but a lively impression of this truth to alter the character of every painful trial, and to give unshaken confidence in every season of alarm. Those who are built upon the true foundation may be sure, that even those distresses (which act the part of the fire, in the Apostle's metaphor) are appointed and permitted for their benefit; these trials are to manifest plainly, whether the spiritual material is of their enduring nature which alone can constitute the eternal temple. In that day when each true christian comes forth, as the gold, or the silver, or the precious marble; it will be seen and will cause surpassing wonder, that in very deed every thing during this dispensation has belonged to the saints, who shall reign with the Lord Jesus in the next.

QUESTIONS.

In what degree do I make my minister necessary to my intercourse with God? Do his instructions promote my secret communion with God, or do I only feel God's presence when he is teaching me?

In what way do I look for a blessing upon the minstry? Have I a lively impression that it is given by God, as He wills? or do I secretly feel that it only comes to me through the teaching of any particular minister?

What is the foundation of my hope for eternity? If I do acknowledge that Christ is that foundation, have I at the same time any other hope which does not depend solely upon him? What place do my own good works hold in my opinion of the cause of my salvation?

Am I frequent and diligent in the exercise of self-examination? by what standard do I test my own conduct and its motives? Is it by the rule of the scriptures? Is it by the rule of my own public profession? How does my

conduct agree with these rules, and in what respects does it differ from them?

What has been the result of the trials in this life, to which my faith has been exposed? Has it given me reason to believe, that I am one of those who will partake of the everlasting glory in Christ? Have I reason to hope, that I shall form part of the reward of my minister? Or, have I reason to fear, that all his care and instruction is, in my case, only preparing for him the suffering of a loss?

THE PRAYER.

Thou gracious God, who hast declared thyself to be a jealous God, who wilt not give thine honor to another,—enable me ever to honor thee through the ministry of thy word; and teach me to refrain from every feeling, that would ascribe the least effect of thy power to the instrument by whom thou workest. Let the instructions I receive out of thy holy word be the means of leading me more constantly into the secret of thy presence; and make me look only to thee, for increase upon the seed sown. On Jesus Christ alone I place my hope; upon him only I desire to be built as a living stone of thy spiritual temple. The application of his atonement, needed for every one of my sins, is equally needed for the iniquity of my holy things. Teach me that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing, that I may plead Christ, and Him alone, for my salvation. Search me and try my heart O Lord, and give me wisdom and grace to follow thee in thy searchings into the darkness within me; where sin yet remaineth, make me to discover what ever needs correcting, and so to bring it to thee for correction: that when the hour of trial comes, in which the sincerity and power of my faith will be most severely tested, it may be found that thou hast already prepared me for the fire, and that thy spirit within me keeps me enduringly. Give me the blessed testimony, that thou art pleased to preserve me for the great day of thy glory; let not the service which any of thy ministers may have rendered to my soul make them to suffer loss; but grant that I may be destined for the exceeding privilege of forming part of the crown of him by whom thou hast called me, for the glorious day of the appearing of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

FIFTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS IV.

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Ministers—how to be considered	1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.
must be faithful.	2 MOREOVER it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
	3 BUT with me it is a very small thing that I
who not the judge	should be judged of you, or of man's judgment
	4 [*day*]: yea, I judge not mine own self. FOR I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified:
who the judge	BUT he that judgeth me is the Lord.
Inference	5 THEREFORE judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come,
	who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: AND THEN shall every man have praise of God.
Instruction under the figure	6 AND these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and *to* Apollos for your sakes;
	THAT ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, THAT no one of you be puffed up for one against another.
folly of rivalry	7 FOR who maketh thee [*distinguisheth thee*] to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? NOW IF thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?
its effects on them	8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us:
	and I would to God ye did reign, that we also
contrasted	9 might reign with you. FOR I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as [or, *us the last apostles, as*] it were appointed to death:
	FOR we are made a spectacle [*theatre*] unto the world, and to angels, and to men.
	10 We *are* fools for Christ's sake,
	but ye *are* wise in Christ;
	we *are* weak,
	but ye *are* strong; ye *are* honourable,
	11 but we *are* despised. Even unto this present hour

we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are
12 buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:
13 being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day.

as warning—
14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my
his right to warn
15 beloved sons I warn *you*. FOR though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye* not many fathers: FOR in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

and to direct
16 WHEREFORE I beseech you, be ye followers of me.
17 FOR THIS CAUSE have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

reproof
18 Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.
19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.
20 FOR the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in
21 power. What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?

EXPLANATION.

After having pointed out the great errors that had been committed in the church at Corinth, by the unholy rivalry between the partisans of different teachers, the apostle now proceeds to state, what is the proper position in which teachers ought to stand in the mind of a christian. They should be considered as the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ—stewards appointed to supply his family with the spiritual food of those doctrines, which (being beyond the reach of man's mind, and having been hidden from him until it pleased God to reveal them) may well be termed the "mysteries of God." (Eph. iii. 9. 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.) And they too, like other stewards, must approve themselves faithful in their trust. In order however to shew that those, for whom the steward is appointed to provide, are not the proper judges of his fidelity, Paul tells the Corinthians that it was a matter of small moment to him what judgment they formed of him with regard to the discharge of his ministry. He did not hold himself responsible to human judgment—nay, he did not even

trust in his own judgment concerning himself. He was not indeed conscious of being justly chargeable with neglect; still it did not follow from this, that he was free from all blame; but not depending upon the judgment of man, he declared that the only one, who could form a true judgment of him was the Lord Jesus.

This being the case, he exhorted the Corinthians not to pass judgment, or form decided opinions on any matter, during the present time, but to wait until the great day of the Lord's return to the earth. He will then lay bare those motives and feelings at present covered in the heart; and hidden things being then seen, and the thoughts of the heart made manifest, each person shall stand in his right position, and receive that measure of approbation which God will adjudge to them.

Having given these general exhortations with reference to the peculiar evils of the Corinthian church at that time, the apostle proceeded to make the application so direct and particular, that it could not be mistaken by those to whom he wrote. He told them that in what he had been writing to them with respect to the differences and divisions caused by the partisans of different teachers, he had employed his own name and that of Apollos figuratively, out of delicacy to them; in order not to mention the names of those particular persons, whose position he had transferred to himself. He intended by this means to teach them, that they were not to look upon their ministers in a higher point of view than that in which they are placed in the scriptures; and that no member of the church should boast of the acquirements of any minister, to the disparagement and prejudice of any other.

Then addressing (as it would appear) some minister who was thus injudiciously exalted by a party (or perhaps addressing some member of the flock who by proudly boasting of his minister assumed the superior benefit to be derived from his teaching); Paul earnestly asks him, who it was that made him thus superior (as was supposed) to others? What learning, what knowledge, what talent did he possess, that had not been bestowed upon him; and if he had received it as a gift bestowed, what room was there for boasting as if he possessed it of his own power and

merit. From this searching question, the Apostle passes to a tone of strong irony. They had become satiated with knowledge, forsooth—abundant in riches—kingly in power, during the time of Paul's absence from them. Then dropping the sarcasm, he gave vent to the feelings raised in his mind by the very reference to a kingly state amongst christians. He told them how earnestly he desired that they might really exercise a royal power; which would only be, when He who was slain and had redeemed them to God, having made them kings and priests unto God, should establish his glorious kingdom upon earth, when his saints should reign with him (Rev. v. 9, 10): for then the apostle would rest from his labours and sufferings, and be a partaker of that royal glory together with them.

This thought led him to give a rapid sketch of the actual condition of the apostles in the world; so calculated to strengthen his desire for the consummation at the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and so strongly contrasted with the circumstances of the favorite teachers and their rival congregations amongst the professing church at Corinth. It would seem (he said) that God had seen fit to place the apostles (as being Christ's principal ambassadors) in the last and lowest situation, as it were of criminals condemned to death. They were exhibited as a sight to angels—a gazing stock for men;—they were looked upon as devoid of common sense for preaching the gospel; but the partisan teachers at Corinth were treated as men of wisdom. The apostles were considered as weak, while the Corinthian teachers were boasted of as strong. These were treated with honour, while the apostles were receiving the scorn of the world. Long as they had been engaged in preaching the gospel, they were still in a dependent position, exposed to hunger and thirst, and the want of necessary clothing. They received personal insult, and ignominious treatment—they had no home, no settled place to dwell in—they had to earn their own subsistence by the labour of their own hands. Yet, notwithstanding, they did not suffer all these things in the spirit of the world; but when they were insulted, they gave good words—when persecuted, they bore it patiently—when

traduced and abused, they replied in gentle terms: in a word, they were treated as if they had been the vilest refuse of mankind, the rejected filth in cleansing all things.

After writing this strong and affecting contrast, Paul's heart flowed forth in those same feelings of anxious desire to deal tenderly with them, which we have already seen in his letters to the Thessalonian church. He told his Corinthian converts, that in what he had written, he had no intention of putting them to shame; but that he had rather treated them, as a father treats his children. He claimed them as his own children, and as such warned them with parental affection, as well as authority. They might have been carried on in christian instruction by thousands of other ministers, but there could be no rival claims for the instrumentality by which they were first converted; for in the power of Christ Jesus, and through the preaching of his gospel, Paul had been the agent by whom the new birth of the Spirit had been imparted to them. Spiritually speaking, they were his "children of whom he had travailed in birth again till Christ was formed in them" (Gal. iv. 19), he had "begotten them through the gospel." Having such a claim, Paul earnestly exhorted them to walk in his steps, to imitate him, as children would a father. And (he tells them) in order that they might be the better able to do this, he had commissioned Timothy to go to Corinth. Timothy was bound to Paul by the same tie, which bound the Corinthians to him. The apostle calls Timothy his "beloved son;" and testifies that he is "faithful in the Lord." His commission at Corinth was, to recal to the minds of the church there Paul's methods of christian instruction and discipline, which he was in the habit of teaching wherever he planted a church. Some of the Corinthians had been elated with a vain confidence, which made them so bold as to say that Paul would never come back to Corinth again: but this he assured them was a great mistake, for that he fully intended to pay them a visit very soon, if it pleased God to permit him; and that when he got there, he would prove, not what was the *language* held by those persons who were thus elated, but what was the *power* they actually possessed.

The reality of the christian dispensation upon earth, the kingdom of God, depended not on the outward profession of the lip, but on the inward power of the Holy Ghost. As he was certainly coming to them so soon, Paul asked the Corinthians whether they would desire him to come for the purpose of chastening them with authority, or whether they wished him to be amongst them in love, and in that spirit which would manifest itself in meek forbearance.

APPLICATION.

24. The several applications of the important passage in the last portion, will have prepared the mind for the statement which the apostle here makes, respecting the manner in which christians are to regard their ministers —as the servants of Christ, as stewards of the mysteries of God. Without going so far as to draw down the reproof given to the Corinthian christians, each member of the church may often find it very difficult to avoid those comparisons, which arise from the diversities of gifts, and the different modes of teaching which belong to different ministers. And the only way to avoid falling into this snare is to keep in mind, that every one who ministers the truth as it is in Jesus, supplies the heavenly food which is able to save the soul; as a steward in the household of God, he must be regarded with due honour for the master's sake, however little we may be able to relish the manner in which he fulfils the duties of his office. And since the blessing must come from on high, it may turn out hereafter in the great day of account, that the Lord has been pleased to employ some servants who were thought little of and despised, as his instruments for gathering the souls of his people, quite as effectual as some who have been gifted with far more attractive talents. And above all, the great point of the apostle's application should never be forgotten. It was a matter of small moment to him, what the opinion of men might be concerning his ministry; for these stewards of the Lord's household have to discharge their responsibility only to God himself. The result of all this ought to be, that we should be continually striving to become more forbearing in our judgments, and more earnest in our prayers, on

behalf of the ministers of the gospel, than of any other portion of our fellow-christians.

25. In considering the advice which Paul had been giving to the Corinthians, it is important to observe the delicacy, as well as the faithfulness, with which he adapts his reproof to the particular state of mind of those he was addressing. In order not to shock their feelings abruptly, so as to excite the natural opposition of the heart, the apostle described their case much in the same way that Nathan had used with David; in order to give their judgment a fair field for exercise, before the personal excitement of passion could confuse and pervert it. For the sake of the Corinthian offenders, he had in the way of supposition transferred the circumstances from the persons of the actual party-leaders then residing at Corinth, to himself and to Apollos, who were no longer there. But when the object of this transfer was accomplished, and he had led on the minds of the Corinthians to a right understanding of the case, he plainly tells them that he had only spoken figuratively in this application of his own name; and leaves them under the self-condemnation resulting from the facts, unmixed by feeling towards the persons. This is a beautiful lesson in reproving. Impetuous christians often fail in producing the effect which they sincerely desire when exercising reproof, because they do not take pains to win the mind away from its prejudices, and to quicken the conscience before it is controlled by passion or by pride. Scarcely any thing in christian life requires more spiritual wisdom, than the giving reproof.

26. But Paul's delicacy in approaching the subject did not counteract his faithfulness in applying it, nor his courage in correcting for them it. The irony with which he contrasts the condition and treatment of the teachers at Corinth with the sufferings of the apostles themselves, is one of the severest passages that has been left us from his pen. The same contrast exists at present between many classes in the professing church, and the spiritual children of God, their self-denying consistency brings upon them privations, sometimes of a very trying

nature, while multitudes of orthodox professors feel nothing of the offence of the cross. Though very different in degree, the contrast is similar in kind; and this should lead every christian to consider, in which point of view he himself may really be seen, whether as a fool with St. Paul, or as wise with the teachers at Corinth. If it should be found that we have some marks, that may serve to class us with those who are called to suffer like the apostles, we have here plain directions as to the way in which we are to conduct ourselves, under those lesser trials to which we may be exposed. If we are reviled, the apostles gave good words to their revilers—if we are persecuted, the apostles bore their persecutions patiently—if we are defamed, the apostles defended themselves with gentle entreaties. There are very few real christians who may not find themselves called to manifest, that they follow the apostle in some of these particulars.

27. This passage contains one of the strongest statements of the peculiar tie which exists between the instruments of God's grace, and the persons who receive the benefits of that grace. It is compared to the parental tie, the closest which exists on earth.—"In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." The minister claims to be the father, and calls upon the convert to follow him as a child. While this involves a high responsibility in the ministers of Christ, to whom all the parental influence is given, even in a higher sense than belongs to the natural father; it calls upon converts to receive their godly admonitions with more than filial respect and affection. The bond is one which, being spiritual, is also everlasting; and accordingly we find the Apostle (in the passage to the Thessalonians already referred to), tracing the union beyond the bounds of this present life, and looking forward to the joy of presenting his spiritual children in the day of the Lord, as his crown of rejoicing. A sense of the reality of this union, is one of the strongest means of preserving the feeling, and conduct referred to at the opening of this portion: while also it fits the christian to receive the instructions afforded by the minister in that spirit of affection, which quickens the attention,

and enlivens the interest, and thus becomes the means of impressing the heart more readily with the saving truth of the gospel.

QUESTIONS.

In what manner do I regard the office of the minister? What are my feelings towards ministers? Do I consider my minister in the light of a father, and strive to follow his instructions as becomes a child? Have I disparaging opinions of any individual ministers? How do I treat their faults? what proportion of my prayers are on behalf of ministers?

In what manner have I acted towards any person whom it has been my duty to reprove? How much of tenderness—how much of delicacy—how much of faithfulness has there been in my conduct? how have I combined them?

Am I consistently bold in reproving those whom I am justified in reproving? How do I bear the results of such consistency? when I am reviled, what language do I use in reply? When I am illtreated, in what temper do I bear it? When I am defamed, how do I defend myself?

THE PRAYER.

Gracious Lord, who hast condescended to reveal thyself in thy holy word, and to send forth thy servants as ambassadors for Christ, to reconcile those who are naturally at enmity with thee; I thank thee that thou hast sent thy gospel, and the ministry of thy word, within the reach of my heart; and I pray thee to bless that ministry to the saving of my soul, and my continued growth in grace. Enable me to feel the love of a child towards those who administer to me the bread of life; and as thy ministers are men of like passions with others, and commissioned with a greater responsibility, I earnestly beseech thee to give them grace in proportion to their need. Bless the minister from whom I receive instruction; and teach me to be forbearing with respect to his infirmities, and prayerful on his behalf. O Lord thou requirest all thy people to exhort one another daily; give me grace to fulfil this command; and fill me with love and with wisdom, whenever I may speak to a fellow-sinner with words of reproof. Teach me how to be tender. Strengthen me that I may

be faithful. Endue me with firmness that I may correct those over whom thou has been pleased to give me influence. Enable me to reprove, as one that knows the value of christian reproof; and teach me how to bear with that natural repugnance to reproof which may break forth in those, whom I may desire to lead into the way of life. O Lord Jesus, who hast left us an example that we should follow thy steps, give me grace to remember, that when thou wast reviled, thou reviledst not again; and send thy Spirit to keep the door of my lips, when the reviling of others might ensnare me into unchristian expressions. Give me patience to suffer the unkindness of others; and whenever I may be defamed, give me wisdom to defend my cause with calmness and courage; without self-exaltation, but for the glory of thy name, O Father, and thine, O Saviour, whose I am, and whom I serve. AMEN.

SIXTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS V.

INDEX WORDS.	V.
A charge against them	1 It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.
their unconcern	2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.
Paul's judgment	3 FOR I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged [or, *determined*] already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath
	4 so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and sentence	5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

effect on the church	6 Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?
cleansing	7 Purge out THEREFORE the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. FOR even Christ our passover is sacrificed [or, *slain*] for us:
	8 THEREFORE let us keep the feast [or, *holy-day*],
contrast	not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness;
	BUT with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.
difference as to those	9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with
without	10 fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of
and within	the world.
	11 BUT NOW I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an
	12 one no not to eat. FOR what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge
	them that are within?
	13 BUT them that are without God judgeth.
therefore	THEREFORE put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

EXPLANATION.

The question put by the Apostle to the Corinthians, at the close of the last portion, prepared them for the correction he was about to give them. While assuring them that he certainly intended to pay them a visit, he had asked whether they desired that he should come unto them "with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness" (iv. 21); and he now proceeds to explain the occasion of his question, and the mode by which they might enable him to come in the latter, rather than in the former spirit to which he alluded.

It was well known, and generally talked about, that a great scandal existed in the Corinthian church; nothing less than the toleration of a connexion of the grossest immorality; so gross indeed, that even the sensual and debased manners of the ignorant heathen would not sanction such a crime, which could not be mentioned by decent people amongst them. A member of the christian community was carrying on an incestuous intercourse, with a woman who was the wife of his own father. This man

continued to be received as a member of the church; and yet the Corinthians were proudly boasting of their spiritual gifts and knowledge, and had a vain conceit of their own wisdom; whereas grief and humiliation that any one among them could possibly have committed such a sin would have been the proper evidence of a truly christian state; neither should they have been satisfied until the gross offender had been separated from their communion.

What however the Corinthians had not felt for themselves, Paul felt for them. Though not personally amongst them, he had in his spirit considered himself as present; and judging as one present, he had determined upon the proper course to be pursued with reference to this immoral professor. He charged them, by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, to assemble together as the church, for the purpose of enforcing the necessary discipline, according to the apostolic direction (Paul being with them in spirit), under the power of the great Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ: and with this awful sanction, and in this solemn manner, to excommunicate the offender. The expression employed by the apostle, to convey this sentence of excommunication, is one which refers to the great distinction between the church and the world. The church is often called in scripture "the kingdom of God," and "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xii. 28. Mark i. 14, 15; iv. 26. Luke vii. 28; xvii. 20. John iii. 3, 5, &c., &c.); and Satan is said to be "the prince of this world." (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. vi. 12. James iv. 4. Rev. xii. 9.) To belong to the church is therefore to be a subject in the kingdom of God; and to be cast out of the communion of the church is to be banished into the world, which is under the rule of Satan. When therefore the apostle directs, that a professing christian shall be delivered "unto Satan," he commands the excommunication of the individual, by which he will be placed amongst the persons who are under the dominion of Satan; being deprived of the means of grace, and of intercourse with the Lord's people.

But the apostle told the Corinthian church what was the purpose for which this offender was thus to be "delivered unto Satan." It was in order that the flesh

might be destroyed, that the spirit might be afterwards saved. It has been supposed that this "destruction of the flesh" included the infliction of some bodily disease, placed upon the sinner by the miraculous powers entrusted to the apostles; but though such a result might certainly have followed the apostolic sentence, yet we are not told that this was the case; and it may be quite enough to understand, that the object of delivering this sinful christian to Satan's devices was, that by the struggle to which he would be called in his excommunicate condition, he might be so taught by the Holy Ghost to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts," that his spirit might be purified in that fiery trial; and so his sins might be found to be "blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts iii. 19.)

Having thus commanded the course which was to be taken, in dealing with the individual offender, the apostle again refers to the condition in which the toleration of the offence placed the whole church. They boasted of their privileges and superior gifts; but such boasting was very unsuitable. They ought to have known, that, as a small quantity of yeast will diffuse itself through the whole mass of dough into which it is placed, so will the allowance of a single sin extend the corrupting influence into every part of community. Then carrying on his metaphor, he urges them to purify themselves from the prevailing leaven of the old corrupt flesh; that in getting rid of this toleration of evil, they may become altogether a new mass. The comparison of the leaven leads the apostle to apply to this case, the use made of leaven as a type in the Jewish ordinance of the Passover. (Exod. xii. 15, 18—20.) When the Pascal Lamb was killed, the Jews were commanded to put away all leaven from their houses, and to eat unleavened bread for seven days; and they were in the habit of searching diligently into every part of all their habitations, that they might not overlook and permit any to remain. That which was but a type to the Jews was now fulfilled in its antitype. Christ was that antitype—He is the christian's Pascal Lamb (Isa. liii. 7. John i. 29. 1 Pet. i. 19); and his great sacrifice has been performed. It is therefore the duty of christians in keeping

the feast of the true Passover, to fulfil the type as regards the leaven, even as Christ has fulfilled the type as regards the lamb. We are not to profess to be christians, and at the same time retain the corrupting influence of the old nature, like leaven in our houses, in whatever form it may come forth; whether as the unkind and malicious spirit of revenge, or as any of those gross evils of which the case in question was a particular and dreadful instance; but as the unleavened bread of the Jewish passover denoted purity and simplicity, so christians should maintain their profession in sincerity and simple-minded faith.

It appears that Paul must have written a previous letter to the Corinthians, though it has not been handed down to us; for he refers to such an epistle, in which he had forbidden them to associate with persons who were living in the unclean indulgence of fleshly desires. It has been imagined by some, that the apostle refers to some former part of the present epistle; but this can hardly be the case, since he has not expressed such a prohibition in any previous portion of this letter; and in verse 11, he speaks of the present epistle as contrasted with the former to which he refers. Paul states, that in forbidding the mixture to which he alludes, he did not mean to forbid all intercourse with the heathen society, amongst whom the christians were obliged to mix in the ordinary duties and circumstances of life. The habits and manners of the unconverted people of the world were such, that immoral indulgence of the flesh, covetousness, dishonest oppression, and the worship of idols were so common, that if christians were forbidden to have any thing to do with heathen persons who practised any of these things, they must have no communication with the world at all, and withdraw themselves from it altogether. He therefore explains in this his present letter, that christians are forbidden to hold any friendly intercourse of any kind with those, who, being baptized into the church, and therefore being considered as belonging to the christian brotherhood, shall nevertheless live as do the heathen, in any of the particulars Paul had mentioned,—by obeying unclean lusts, or by being avaricious, or by worshipping idols while attending heathen feasts perhaps, or by using violent and bitter

language, or by excess of drink, or by dishonestly extorting what was not due. Now if a professing christian were to manifest any of these tokens of the unrenewed nature, those who spiritually belong to Christ must stand so completely apart from him, that they must not even sit down at the same table with him to take a meal together.

Paul proceeded to enforce the distinction he drew, by stating that, as regarded persons not claiming the privileges of christians, and therefore without and beyond the boundaries of Christ's church, he had no authority, and could exercise no jurisdiction over them in any way. The Corinthian christians knew very well that their own power to control evil, and to judge concerning conduct, extended only over those who were members of the christian church. All others, being beyond the control of the church, are under the direct government of God, in whose hands they must be left. Since however the church *can* enforce discipline upon the members of the body, the apostle enjoins the Corinthians to proceed to the excommunication of the grievous offender concerning whom he had been writing.

APPLICATION.

28. Though it is unnecessary to make any direct application with reference to the peculiar crime here exposed, yet it is of the utmost importance that christians should reflect upon the awful consequences which result from the gradual progress of any allowed sin, in those who profess to be "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It must have been with a knowledge of the evil of sin, and of the holiness required by God, that this unhappy man first allowed himself to encourage in his heart the desires, which at last so deprived him of the power of moral and spiritual perception, as to make him shamelessly commit a shameful crime. Numberless have been the instances of similar consequences resulting from similar beginnings of indulgence; and more particularly by means of sins of the character here referred to. An allowed thought accustoms the mind to contemplate unallowed acts, and prepares it to receive the arguments of temptation without discovering their fallacy. In

proportion as such arguments obtain power, the influence of christian truth is resisted, the Spirit is grieved, the conscience becomes morbid, grace is withdrawn, and the natural heart remains uncontrolled in its affections and impulses. In such a state, the profession of religious truth becomes a customary act of external observance, without producing the slightest effect upon the spirit of him who makes it; and those who are able to observe the wretched being, who thus mocks himself with the form of godliness, wonder at the unaccountable inconsistencies which abound in his conduct, though they may not be able to fathom the depths of some hidden indulgence, which thus makes his acknowledgement of the truth as it is in Jesus "the savour of death unto death" to him.

29. In considering the case of the unhappy sinner himself, we must observe the punishment inflicted by apostolic command. He was to be "delivered unto Satan;" which, as regards the effect upon his own spirit, must have been the means of placing him out of the society in which he might have all the benefits graciously promised to christian communion and christian ordinances when spiritually improved; and in the same proportion of exposing him to the increased advantage which the powers of darkness would so readily seize, in applying their temptations, and in using their influence. This must have been a fearful test of the real character of the man's christianity. If he had never been a true child of God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but had joined the christian church under temporary influence, by some external impulse, or under the power of secondary motives, then he would return to the world's ways, from which his christian profession had been but an unnatural departure for a season. He would have illustrated the case of the man described by our Lord, from whom the unclean spirit went forth of his own accord, returning afterwards to him again, as one returning into his own house, and finding it fully prepared for his reception—swept and garnished. (Luke xi. 21—26.) But if on the other hand he had been grieving the Holy Spirit by whom he had been "sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv.

30); and had been allowed to learn the exceeding danger of the beginning of sin, by being left alone to find the horrible excess to which it leads; then the banishment from God's people, rendered necessary by his sins, would produce the wholesome grief and contrition by which he would be drawn to cleave more closely to the cross of Christ; and the fearful struggle with Satanic temptations and powers, to which his heart would be the more disposed, and which he would have to sustain at great disadvantage, would have the effect of making him seek more earnestly the aid of the divine Spirit, by which he would be enabled to be more than conqueror; and thus the effect would be "the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." We have reason to hope that this was the effect actually produced upon the unhappy sinner at Corinth, as we are informed by the apostle, in his subsequent epistle, of his readmission into the Church. (2 Cor. ii. 6—11.)

30. But besides the sentence against the individual sinner in this case, the apostle visits with sharp rebuke the church which permitted him to continue in communion with them. And this suggests an important application to every body of christians, and to every particular circle of society where christianity is professed. It may not be necessary to point out the importance of restoring the powers of the church, for the exercise of a godly discipline over the members with the sanction of authority, since the readers of this Guide to the Epistles might only be able to regret their incapacity to forward the end desired. But the apostle has put the case in such a point of view as may enable every christian to act upon the principle laid down; and in the absence of that authoritative discipline, which it may be difficult in the present times to enforce, each may and ought to conduct themselves towards open and scandalous offenders, so as to make the want of that power of discipline a less important omission in ecclesiastical practice. The state of society, even in this christian country, is such as enables the most common observer to draw a broad distinction, between persons who make a religious profession, and those who do not. Persons who distinctly neglect all religious ordinances, and

make no claim to a religious character, are to be treated as the christians were desired to treat the heathen society at Corinth. Necessary duties and accidental circumstances must produce communication between christians and this class of persons, which must be carried on with courtesy and propriety, although no interchange of sentiment and feeling can occur in such intercourse. But when a person makes some profession of religion, and by his outward line of conduct appears to intend to lay claim to the baptismal privileges of a christian, we are called to the exercise of the closer intercourse of communion with such a one; and we ought to consider this a duty, in a greater or less degree, as circumstances and characters may vary. If however any such person is known to live in some course distinctly inconsistent with the holiness of his christian profession, it is the bounden duty of every sincere believer in Jesus, to mark the distinction to be drawn between the true church and such scandalous offenders, by avoiding all intercourse with any who thus give occasion of offence; "with such a one, no not to eat"—not to allow them to be considered as our associates, or to let the world suppose it possible, that a real christian can give countenance to such conduct by continuing even in ordinary acquaintance with those who adopt it.

31. If we were to act according to the strict letter of the apostle's injunctions, the holiness required by a christian profession would become sufficiently distinct by the plain separation of many persons, called christians indeed, but evidently worldly, who never could be invited, by the more respectable people of the world, to meet in common intercourse with more consistent christians. Not to mention the plain case of those who live notoriously in impurity, the apostle classes with them the covetous, who crave after the abundance of this world's goods; and the rapacious, whose greediness of gain urges them to extort it whether justly or unjustly; and the idolaters, who make to themselves other gods than the true God. These he had previously mentioned as ordinary characteristics of the worldly; but when speaking of the inconsistencies, which call for entire separation from those professing christians

who are guilty of them, he adds the unbridled use of the tongue, which makes men railers; and the intemperance which makes men drunkards. In distinct and excessive cases, it may be hoped that really christian people will avoid the acquaintance of any such characters; but it may also be feared, that the difficulty of maintaining the separation, in the midst of a world in which society in every class is so ordered as at present, may induce many to blind themselves to very distinct evidences of covetousness, extortion, idolatry, violence of language, and intemperance; and may lead them to adopt the measure of the world's toleration in ascertaining what may be considered as so excessive as to call for separation.

32. The effect produced in a body of christians by the toleration of one open violation of moral requirement is described by the apostle through the comparison of leaven; —"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump:"—an expression which he afterwards repeats in writing to the Galatians; and he mentions one of the means by which this leaven works, when he says to the Corinthians, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." (1 Cor. xv. 33.) The natural heart is prone to evil—"the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. xvii. 9); and it is easier to become familiarized with the sight of that to which we are prone, than of that which is opposed to the natural bent of our inclinations. The painfulness which first accompanies the observation of a gross sin; very soon diminishes, and gradually ceases altogether. What continues to be tolerated, soon comes to be excused; this makes way for an unexpressed approval, while it prepares the mind to admit, without opposition, the thought of that indulgence of our own particular desires, which may have been long resisted, until Satan finds the way to whisper to us, that even-handed justice in the church would be as lenient to the failings of one, as to the excesses of another. The contemplation of sin in company with others, who are equally interested in repressing it with ourselves, and yet equally tolerant or charitably silent on the subject, tends almost as much as any thing to deaden the sensibility to sin. The fact that others see it, as well

as we, enables us to delude ourselves, by each casting off upon the other the responsibility of checking and reproving it; and in shrinking from the responsibility with reference to others, we insensibly lose the feeling of responsibility as to restraining our personal sins: and thus it is that the little leaven of one instance of open sin, in persons still admitted to the free intercourse of christian society, soon leavens the whole lump with that laxity of principle, and that licentiousness of practice, which reduce the standard of holiness, and weaken spiritual life till it is "ready to die." The remedy applied by the apostle to this state of things is the blood of the Paschal Lamb, and the faithful contemplation of His sufferings. When the Passover was celebrated, most diligent search was made for the least morsel of leaven, in order to exclude it. The Lamb of God—Christ Jesus—has been sacrificed for our sins: when we keep the christian feast, and call to mind His wonderful atonement, which we claim as being made for us, how carefully must we do in reality, what was done by the Jews in an emblem. How pure and simple in truth and sincerity should be the conduct of those, whose life is a professed celebration of the sacrifice made upon the cross to "cleanse us from all sin," and to purify "a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

33. In spite of the much cause for humiliation and grief, the christians of Corinth were a people who were puffed up,—proud of the high attainments and remarkable gifts which had been bestowed upon them as a church. How remarkable a testimony this affords to the manner in which pride blinds the reason, and renders men unfit to judge of their own condition. The blindness thus produced increases in proportion as the pride is encouraged and indulged; and the consequence is, that it is commonly found, that those who are most under the influence of pride have in reality the least reason to be proud. The Corinthians while boasting of their spiritual gifts could not observe the foul blot that degraded their christian character, even in the eyes of the heathen; and many an individual christian, while secretly self-exalted on account of supposed scriptural knowledge or scriptural attainments,

is unable to discover some plain inconsistency in his conduct, which all can observe, and on account of which true christians mourn, and the worldly cast reproach on the religion he professes.

QUESTIONS.

What pains do I take to repress the uprising of sinful desires within me? How far am I alarmed at them, by considering the end, of which they are the beginnings? Or, how far am I rendered negligent in checking them, by supposing excessive results to be impossible?

What is the nature of my spiritual condition? Has Satan's power within me been subdued by the "stronger than he?" Or is my religious profession and decent conduct the consequence of his having withdrawn himself of his own accord?

Am I of the world, or of the true church of Christ? What care do I take to manifest by the choice of my friends and companions, to which I belong? What is my general conduct towards persons evidently living as of the world, and evidently not living as spiritual christians? Are there any persons amongst my tolerated acquaintance, whom I know to be notorious for some grave impropriety of conduct?

How far am I influenced to think more lightly of sin, by the habit of seeing it tolerated in some particular sinner? Am I proud of my religious advancement? Do I mourn for the effect of sinful inconsistencies in others? What occasion do I myself give for such mourning in the hearts of my fellow-christians?

THE PRAYER.

Thou all-seeing God, who knowest the secrets of all hearts, shew me the dangers which beset me from the evil desires of my own heart. Keep me ever in remembrance that sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Make me to be alarmed lest baneful fruits may ripen from the earliest buddings of sin within me; and by thy grace enable me to repress them in the beginning, hating the garment even spotted with the flesh. Manifest in me the sure signs of thy grace, that I may know that thou hast taken possession of my heart, and driven out the strong man armed. Let me not return to the world, from

which thy Spirit has separated me to be a subject of thy kingdom. Enable me so to conduct myself towards those that are without, that while none may be justified in taking offence, none may conceive that I sanction that which thou hast forbidden; and teach me so to walk with those who profess to belong to thy church, that I may encourage all who adorn the doctrine of their Saviour, and separate from those who live in open disobedience of thy holy word. Keep me, I beseech thee, from those evil communications which corrupt good manners, and preserve me from the deadening influence of tolerated sin, whether in myself or others. Give me that spirit of humility, by which I may exercise the gifts thou graciously bestowest upon me, without falling into the snare of pride; and teach me, Lord, to mourn for the effects of sin in my fellow-christians, so that I may be warned against the danger of causing grief to others. Let the name of Christ be glorified in me and by me, through the indwelling of the blessed Spirit of the same Jesus, our Saviour. AMEN.

SEVENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS VI. 1—11.

INDEX WORDS.	VI.	
Another charge against them	1	Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?
The saints' office in superior things	2	Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?
	3	Know ye not that we shall judge angels?
much more inferior things		how much more things that pertain to this life?
	4	If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least
	5	esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

Reproof

6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before
7 the unbelievers. Now THEREFORE there is utterly
a fault among you, because ye go to law one with
the better course another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why
do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to* be defrauded?
8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your*
who not inherit the 9 brethren. Know ye not that the unrighteous
kingdom shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be
not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idola-
ters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers
10 of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor
covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor
extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
11 And such were some of you:
the saints' change BUT ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye
are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by
the Spirit of our God.

EXPLANATION.

In closing the argument of the last portion, the apostle had referred to the judgment to be passed by the church upon its own members—"them that are within," in contradistinction from "them that are without."—the heathen, amongst whom the christians were living, and over whom he had disclaimed the thought of having jurisdiction. (ch. v. 12.) He now proceeded to reverse the view of the subject, in order to rebuke the Corinthians for another glaring inconsistency which had become common among them; and which must have tended very much to hinder the distinctive character of the church, and its separateness from the unconverted world. When there arose any occasion for a suit at law—any difference, such as might exist between man and man without evident blame to either, and which might require to be settled by authority, how was it that any member of the church could bring himself to carry his cause into the public courts, before the heathen magistrates, instead of submitting it to the judgment and arbitration of christian referees, who might be appointed for the purpose? Surely they must be aware that one of the blessings that is to form part of "the inheritance of the saints in light," will be to "sit with Christ in his throne" (Rev. iii. 21), when he shall come to judge the world—to "reign on the earth" in its future state, when "the Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Rev. v. 10. Zech. xiv. 5, 9)—"to execute judgment upon all."

(Jude 14, 15. Dan. vii. 10, 22. Matt. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 30.) If such is the destination for which christians are preparing, and for which they are being conformed to the image of Christ by his Spirit, are they to be looked upon as incapable of deciding upon matters, which are of the smallest importance when compared with those in which they are to have so high an office? The Corinthian christians ought to have known that even the fallen angels, that are "reserved unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6), shall pass under the judgment of the saints, who in that day shall sit on the throne of the Great Judge of all; and if they are to be called to this honour, how much more ought they to be looked upon as worthy to decide the affairs of this present life.

The sentence that follows (in verse 4) admits of two different interpretations, according as the Greek word used for "set them to judge" is taken to be in the imperative mood, or in the indicative; for either of which it may stand: and it is difficult to decide which was intended by the apostle. Our translators have given it in English, as if it were in the imperative mood; and thus Paul tells the Corinthians, that if they had amongst them any occasions for lawsuits, they ought to appoint even those members of the church which were generally considered as the least wise, to decide such causes, rather than appeal to heathen judges, who could have no christian wisdom at all. Many commentators have however considered, that the word is intended to express the sense of the indicative mood, which would render it a question; and in this way Paul asks the Corinthians whether, when occasions for law-suits arose amongst christians, they would set up as judges, persons like the heathen magistrates, who were the least esteemed in the church. There are critical arguments for both interpretations; but as the substance of the meaning is the same with reference to the apostle's object, it matters little which might be the more correct. As however our translators have selected the former interpretation, it may be better to adopt that.

Paul characterises this conduct in the Corinthian church as a reproach to them: he mentions it as a matter of which they ought to be ashamed. Was it possible that amongst

their whole number, there was not one whose character for wisdom would justify them in referring their disputes to his judgment; but that they must needs go to law, christian against christian, in the courts where unbelieving and unchristian men presided? But in fact the whole thing was wrong from beginning to end;—the fault was in going to law at all. If they knew of what spirit they should be of as christians, they would not allow themselves to be provoked into litigation one with another—they would rather bear the wrong, which too often excited them to expose the honour of the christian cause by going to law in the heathen courts—they would rather put up with the loss produced by the fraudulent conduct of any professing christian. Instead however of such forbearance for such an object, it was unhappily the case, that in the christian community many wronged each other—many practised fraud even amongst themselves. But they ought to know that those who were dishonest would not attain to that inheritance of the kingdom in heaven, of which the christian church was but the preparation and beginning upon earth. Let none deceive themselves;—"without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xiii. 14):—the unholy shall not possess the kingdom in which the Lord shall be king, and the true saints of God—really spiritual christians—shall sit on that throne of judgment to which Paul had just alluded. The apostle gives a distressing list of those dreadful sins to which the christians at Corinth were more especially tempted, by their contact with the profligate heathens of that corrupt city; and the commission of which would prevent their inheriting the kingdom of God. These are of the same character with those he had already specified, when he commanded that a complete separation should be maintained from professing christians who were guilty of them. The impurity of unclean lusts, connected as it ever is with the practice of idolatry—open dishonesty—evident avarice—drinking to drunkenness—violence of bitter language—oppression for the personal benefit; none who continue in the practice of these sins, shall be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Amongst the Corinthian christians to whom Paul was writing, there were some who, living in

the abominations of heathen society, had been guilty of such things; but he reminded them that in becoming christians, they had been cleansed from the foulness of such deeds;—they had been rendered holy—they had been made in the sight of God as though they were just, by the atonement and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, in whose name they appeared before God; and this justification had been applied to them by the Holy Spirit of God. By thus reminding them of the position in which they stood as professing christians, he suggested that plain inference afterwards expressed in his epistle to the Romans (ch. vi.), "how shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

APPLICATION.

34. The subject of appealing to the law for the settlement of disputes is rendered difficult to religious people, by the complicated relations of society in a country nominally christian. In the present portion, the apostle refers to the manner of settling disputes between christians, who were living under heathen laws, administered by heathen magistrates; and the main point of his reproof applies to the sin of appealing to judges who cannot possibly be able to act upon christian principles. This precise case can never occur, where the law of the land is administered under the sanction of the Gospel, and where the judges are necessarily members of the christian church. But then follows the second point introduced by the apostle. He extends his reproof to those christians who appealed to law at all; and it is this that renders it difficult to suit the proper application to the present times. A nominal christianity is unhappily so often without the spiritual life that is capable of carrying out the directions of the apostle, that, in many cases, persons who would sincerely desire to avoid litigation, are placed in a position in which plain duty seems to require an appeal to the courts of law. And in such cases, the judges of a christian country must be looked upon as standing in the place of those Christian referees whose arbitration Paul recommends instead of going to law before the Heathen. In every case however true christians must diligently strive

to avoid the litigious spirit to which the apostle alludes, and which impelled those who were fellow-christians to "go to law one with another." The rule which he elsewhere lays down should guide us at all times. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men;" and if with all other men, how much more with those who profess to be members of Christ. The surest way to avoid the necessity of appealing to a legal decision on any right, is to exercise forbearance in the first beginnings of dissension. A watchful care in checking the encroachments of injustice while they may be plainly exposed—a readiness to give up whatever may seem to warrant any aggression on the part of another—a prompt manifestation of willingness to submit to the judgment of unbiassed arbitrators in private—such is the conduct that would follow from the principle recommended by the apostle when he asks the Corinthian christians, "Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"

35. But it is a totally different case when the question is regarded in the point of view into which it is brought by the apostle, when he charges christians with being the aggressors in giving occasion for lawsuits with their brethren. That any person professing to believe the gospel, and to belong to Christ's church, should practise fraud, and be the wrongdoer, is a painful evidence of the truth set forth by our Lord in the parable of the tares and the wheat. The children of the wicked one—the tares sown by the devil—are ever to be found mixed with the children of the kingdom; both are allowed to grow together till the harvest (Matt. xiii. 24-30, 36-43): and as long as they are hidden under the name of christians, they will be made agents by means of whom Satan strives to bring discredit upon the doctrines and profession of the gospel. This is a powerful reason why "every one that nameth the name of Christ should depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. ii. 19); and to strengthen the power of this reason, the apostle assures us that though individuals who are capable of living in iniquity may have their names enrolled amongst the subjects of the gospel-kingdom here, none such can

inherit the kingdom of God in its glorious manifestation —the inheritance of the saints in light. The list of sinful characters which is given in stating this truth, shews how deeply corrupted the carnal heart has become, and how awful is the excess to which men may be carried, if they do not resolutely set themselves, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to depart from iniquity, and to walk worthy of their holy calling as christians. The classification of evil in this list, is not perhaps what would have been made by many persons now, but it is made by the Spirit of God, and in it "revilers" and "drunkards" are included amongst others whose iniquities are too shocking to be mentioned. How little do we know how to estimate sin as it is weighed in the balance of the sanctuary! how differently do we regard particular sins from the way in which they appear to the eye of the all-holy God, who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity."

36. We seldom raise our views and feelings high enough in considering the glorious inheritance of the saints in light; and to this may be attributed much of the earthyness of our hearts, of which Satan takes so great advantage in keeping us under the power of the world. Though "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," yet "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.) Many of the special glories to which the people of Christ are destined, are placed before us, in order to promote that sense of the dignity and honour of being a christian, which ought to facilitate our resistance to any temptation to act inconsistently with so high a calling. The special distinction here urged upon true christians is, that they are to be assessors with Christ in the judgment of wicked men, and even of the angels who left their first estate—that they are to sit with Jesus on his throne. (Rev. iii. 21.) The anticipation of this surpassing honor is set before them, in order to shame them from resorting for judgment to unconverted men, who act only according to the rules of this world's wisdom; which, at the best, is but foolish-

ness with God. And the same argument may be applied, to check all low and worldly desires and compliances in those who are really contemplating the prospect of so high a destiny. It must be remembered that the final object of christians is, that they should be kings and priests unto God, and reign with Christ. (Rev. v. 10; xx. 6.) There is no lower condition to be expected—no place amongst the spirits of the just made perfect, for any who are not admitted to that exceeding honor. The deepest sense of our own unworthiness is perfectly consistent with the anticipation of this exaltation; and not only so, but every notion which supposes that our present unworthiness renders it necessary for us to expect some other, or inferior condition than this, is unscriptural and unfounded. The Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished our salvation in order for this very state of glorification; and the alternatives to a christian are, either to be admitted into this joy of his Lord, or to be cast into outer darkness. (Matt. xxv. 14—30.) We should therefore cherish an abiding sense of the greatness of the honor to be put upon those who are in Christ, and contemplate such of the special points connected with it as are revealed to us by God's Holy Spirit; in order to increase that deadness to the world, and that power against temptation, which an humble reception of those great truths is calculated to promote.

QUESTIONS.

Have I any dispute which either makes law necessary, or is likely to do so? What steps am I taking to prevent the necessity of going to law? What fault have I in the matter? How can I best remedy it?

How do I class the several sins, with which men may be tempted? according to the world's estimate of each? or according to the light thrown upon them in the holy Scriptures?

To what do I look forward when anticipating the blessedness promised to true christians? Am I afraid to realize the statements of Scripture concerning it? or do I dwell upon them with faithful expectation? What effect have they upon me?

THE PRAYER.

Gracious God, whose property is ever to have mercy and to forgive, pardon, I beseech thee, all my sins for Jesus Christ's sake, and give me the Spirit of Christ, my Saviour, that I may be ready to forgive others, as I would have forgiveness at thy hands. Enable me to live peaceably with all men; and when others will not assist my endeavours so to do, give me grace to forbear, and wisdom to manifest my forbearance to the glory of thy name. Keep me from all sin; and make me to hate it, and to look upon it as thou dost, O God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. I magnify thy holy name, that thou hast been pleased to call thy people to be partakers of glory in the kingdom of thy dear Son. Oh! how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up in store for them that love thee. I humbly entreat thee to enable me to anticipate those joys, and that glory which thou hast revealed by thy Spirit; that so I may be more weaned from the world, and more earnestly desirous, and enabled by that Spirit, to walk worthy of the high calling wherewith thou callest those who are made one with thee in thy glorious Son. Hear me, O heavenly Father, and grant me these mercies, for the sake of that, thy Son, my only Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

EIGHTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS VI. 12—20.

INDEX WORDS.	
Christian liberty	12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient [or, *profitable*]: all things are lawful for me,
	BUT I will not be brought under the power of any.
object of the body	13 Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.
	Now the body *is* not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.
its use	14 AND God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also
	15 raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?
its abuse	shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid.
one flesh	16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.
one spirit	17 BUT he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.
abuse	18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.
use	19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of
	20 God, and ye are not your own? FOR ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

EXPLANATION.

A consideration of the difficulties that might occur in applying the Apostle's exhortation not to go to law, might perhaps have led his mind to the next thought which he introduces; although it seems, at first sight, to be a sudden transition from one subject to another. There are many things which a man might do without positively committing an offence against God's law, and yet it might be unfitting and inexpedient for him to do them. For a christian to appeal to the law of the land,—might perhaps in certain circumstances not be wrong; and yet it would be necessary

to consider also whether it would be profitable, in the highest sense of the word, for the spiritual welfare of all. Whether this may have been the connection or not, the apostle proceeds to carry on this thought into other channels; and applies it to the subject with which his former reproof of the Corinthian church had begun in the fifth chapter, and to which he had returned at the close of his latter reproof, in giving the list of sinful characters who "shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

From the things that were lawful *to* him, Paul refers to the things that are lawful *for* him; but he mentions them in order to shew the great difference between being at liberty to use them, and being made a slave to them by their use. A christian may freely enjoy many things, which however would obtain a power over him, if he were to indulge in the enjoyment so as to produce the craving of habit. For instance, food was appointed for the supply of man's wants, and man has a natural appetite for food; they thus were fitted to each other, so that the body should be properly supported. But the body itself is but a means for another and a more worthy end; and the outward and secondary machinery both of the body itself and of the food to support that body, shall one day come to an end by the appointment of God. But this perishable body, which may properly require a moderate supply of food, ought not to be gratified in its carnal lusts. It is intended for the service of the Lord according to his will and purpose; and that same Lord has signified what the purpose is for which he has given us our body and supports it for his service. The eternal Son of God has come in the flesh; and, having submitted to death, God raised his body from the grave; and He will likewise perform the same great work upon the bodies of true christians, when the Lord Jesus shall come from heaven, and "change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself." (Phil. iii. 21.)

The apostle appeals to the Corinthians on this point, as knowing and acknowledging that they, in their bodies, are members of Christ—united to him, their spiritual Head, by the Spirit, as our limbs are to our own bodies. This

being the case, can they possibly (he asks) so use the members of Christ, as to unite them with an impure and unchaste woman as a husband with a wife? God forbid they should be capable of such a thing. Surely they must be aware, that the act of incontinence is a union in impurity, just as two were made "one flesh" by God in the original institution of that marriage which is "honourable amongst all men, and the bed undefiled" (Gen. ii. 24. Heb. xiii. 4): while that of which the body is but the outward tenement, the soul of the man, being joined by the Holy Ghost to Christ, becomes one with Him. By such a motive as this, the apostle urges christians utterly to avoid all impurity of the flesh; "hating even the garment spotted by" it. (Jude 23.) Besides, let them remember that the body of a christian is a temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells; coming from God, and taking possession as it were of the purchase made by Christ. (Acts xx. 28.) The body of a christian does not therefore belong to himself—it is not his own property: but he is bound to employ it, and all the faculties which belong to it, to the glory of that God whose we are, and to whom we owe service.

APPLICATION.

37. It is of the utmost importance to mark the distinction which the apostle draws, between the liberty of action which a christian has in all things which are not sinful, and the bondage under which he may be brought by the force of habit making any action almost necessary. It may be a matter of indifference whether we do some certain act, or refrain from doing it: but if from doing it continually, we acquire so strong a desire as not to be able to refrain from it, we are "brought under the power" of that thing; it may be used by Satan as a means of tempting us to sin, and it ceases to be innocent when it brings us into bondage. Paul applies this principle to the appetites of our animal nature. Food, that is necessary to support the body, may become necessary to us as a mere gratification of appetite; and the shame of being brought under the power of such an appetite is suggested by the fact, that both the food, and the body which it supported, will

be destroyed in the great change which must take place when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality." None, who are really looking to this change with hopeful expectation, can allow themselves to be brought under the power of such desires as seek their gratification in the indulgence of the body. While this may be very clear with respect to the grosser appetites, there are perhaps less evident influences gaining a tyrant power over us; and this by means of habitual indulgence in something that would be in itself indifferent, if in our hearts or habits it were indifferent to us, but which has gradually become sinful to us, as it has gained power over us.

38. The main point to which the apostle alludes in this portion is sufficiently obvious, and requires no additional remarks to direct its application: still one of the great dangers of impurity arises from the silence respecting it that is observed in society. The scriptures however are not silent on this important subject; and whenever they introduce any reference to it, they speak with powerful plainness, as in the present instance. The apostle here draws a striking contrast between the high and glorious purposes for which the body is intended, and the low and degrading use to which it is applied, under the impulses of carnal impurity. The body of a christian is, in its present state, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, and is thereby joined to Christ, as the members are united to the head; it will be hereafter raised by God's "own power," to be "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body." How exalted and heavenly are these uses to which the bodies of men are called, through the incarnation of the Son of God; who, by taking our nature upon him, dignified the human body, not only in his own flesh, which never saw corruption (Acts ii. 26, 27, 30, 31), but also in that of his members, which corrupt as it is "must put on incorruption." (1 Cor. xv. 53.) After contemplating this exaltation, one glance at the carnal degradation spoken of by the apostle will be sufficient to convince our mind that the same body cannot be fitted for the one and for the other of these extremes of purity and impurity.

QUESTIONS.

Is there anything which has become so necessary to me by habit, that I cannot forego it? If the act is innocent in itself, is the habit innocent? Does it involve no sinful consequences of any kind? Am I content to be under its power?

How do I deal with the suggestions of Satan in the form of impure thoughts? Do I remember on such occasions the uses for which my body is set apart by Christ? How do I act in consequence?

THE PRAYER.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, I surrender myself to thy service. Give me the Holy Spirit, that my body, soul, and spirit, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Give me the Spirit of wisdom to know what things are lawful for me; but grant that I may never allow anything, however lawful, to bring me under its power. Enable me to be self-denying, moderate—to keep under my body, and bring it into subjection. Specially preserve me from those fleshly temptations which would overcome spiritual life in the soul. Dwell in me, O Holy Spirit of Christ, and let not sin have dominion over me. Teach me ever to act as one preparing for the glory that is reserved for thy people, when they shall attain unto the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies at the coming of Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

NINTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS VII. 1—24.

INDEX WORDS.	VII.
Answers the letter	1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: *It is* good for a man not to touch a woman.
how to avoid the sin	2 Nevertheless, *to avoid* fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her
	3 own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the
	4 husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath
	5 not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.
Permitted, not commanded	6 BUT I speak this by permission, *and* not of commandment.
as is given to each	7 FOR I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one
	8 after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.
the remedy	9 BUT if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.
not to alter condition	10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband:
	11 BUT and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.
abide if willing	12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her
	13 away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.
why	14 FOR the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

15 BUT if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases:* but God hath called us to peace [*in peace.*]
16 FOR what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save *thy* husband? or how [*what*] knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save *thy* wife?

as called, so walk

17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And

applied to circumcision

18 so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him
19 not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the
20 commandments of God. Let every man abide in

to slavery

21 the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called *being* a servant? care not for it: but if thou
22 mayest be made free, use *it* rather. For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's freeman [*made free*]: likewise also he that is
23 called, *being* free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.
24 Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.

EXPLANATION.

The apostle had hitherto occupied his letter on subjects which arose out of the information he had obtained concerning the Corinthian church from various sources. (See chap. i. 11; v. 1.) But it appears that he had also received a letter from them; in which they had asked his advice upon several points, on which there were differences of opinion and of practice amongst the christians at Corinth. Paul now proceeds to take these various points into consideration, and to give the counsel they sought.

The first of these subjects he treats of, is that which follows in connexion with the matter he had just closed. It appears that there must have been some discussion as to the spiritual advantage or disadvantage of christians marrying. There were many converted Jews in the Corinthian church; and as it has always been held by the Jews that marriage is a duty, from which (without some especial reason) none are exempt; we may suppose that the christian Jews would advocate the marrying of their fellow-members in the church under any circumstances. On the other hand, the christians who had been converted from heathenism, would probably hold very different

opinions, arising from the loose habits of Greek society. Whether this was so or not, the apostle arranges his reply to the letter from Corinth, so as to be suited to such inquiries as would arise from these differences of opinion on the subject.

He gives a direct answer at once to the question concerning the advantage or disadvantage of marriage, by telling the Corinthians that it was a desirable thing for a man not to unite himself in marriage to a woman. The manner in which Paul expresses this, seems to include all kinds of connection of the nature of marriage; whether the matrimonial tie itself, or that state of concubinage, which being common amongst the heathens of Corinth had been tolerated in many instances (as there is reason to fear) amongst the christians there. We find from the subsequent part of this chapter, that this opinion of Paul's had reference to "the present distress,"—the then existing condition of the church in times of trouble and persecution (chap. vii. 26—32): and he goes on to shew, that even under the "distress" which rendered it advisable at the time not to marry, there were other reasons which might counterbalance that which induced him to give such advice. The temptations in such a place as Corinth must have been very powerful, and rendered the danger of sin very great; and therefore in order to be kept safe from such temptations and free from impurity, the apostle said that every man who desired to avoid the danger might marry one wife, and every woman one husband. Polygamy and concubinage was so common in those days, that it seemed to Paul necessary to mention this special restriction. He proceeds in the most delicate manner to enjoin, that the object for which he stated marriage to be advisable ought not to be frustrated. If at any time a christian husband and wife were to remain apart from each other, it was to be by mutual agreement, and to be a temporary separation only, for purposes of religious exercises on particular occasions, on which prayer with fasting were more especially required; —afterwards they were to live together again, neither party being at liberty to refuse, lest the temptation of Satan might again be applied to endanger their souls as before.

The apostle expressly states that the counsel he thus

gave in reply to the request of the Corinthian church, was what he was allowed to advise, rather than what he was directed by inspiration from God to command as of necessity. He heartily desired that every person might be endued with the same spiritual command over the carnal appetites and passions, as he himself was blessed with. But the gifts of God are very various, and variously distributed:—one man is blessed with one manifestation of divine grace, and another man with another—each christian has his own peculiar gift; and Paul did not argue as if all men had the gift of continency because he had that gift. However, he assured those christian men who were without wives, and those women who had lost their husbands, that it would be to their advantage if they continued, like the apostle himself, unmarried. But if they were not blessed with the same gift of continency, he advised them to marry; since it was better that they should have all the inconveniences that might be the result of marriage, rather than endure the fire of a constant war with their carnal passions.

As regarded those who were married, the case was different; and it was not only his own christian injunction, but in this respect he spoke with the authority of the Lord's command. A wife must not leave her husband. Should however any case arise in which a christian wife was already separated from her husband, she must not consider herself at liberty to be married to another man. If she desired to marry, she must be reconciled with her own husband, and return to him. So also with reference to a christian husband, he is not permitted to divorce his wife.

Upon the subject of those marriages which existed between parties, one of whom had been converted to christianity, while the other remained heathen, the apostle resumes his former tone of christian counsel, and says he does not speak as with the authority of divine inspiration. He advises any christian man who may have an unconverted wife, not to separate from her, if she be desirous of continuing to live with him. So also with respect to a christian wife who has an unconverted husband, he counsels such a one not to leave him, if he be

willing to continue to live together as man and wife. Christians in such circumstances should consider, that a heathen husband being joined to a christian wife, or a heathen wife being joined to a christian husband, is in a certain sense hallowed by the connexion, so that the children of such a marriage are born with the privilege of being brought into the church of Christ, and may thus be said to be holy; whereas if the one christian party did not sanctify the other, the children would be as children of the heathen. If however the unconverted husband or wife will not tolerate the christianity of the other, and require a separation, then the believing party, husband or wife, may consent to that arrangement. Under such circumstances a christian was not bound to enforce the continuance of the connexion, in defiance of an unconverted husband or wife. In calling any one to the knowledge of Christ, God does not impose the necessity of such a struggle as would ensue. He has called us to peace. In order however to shew the undesirableness of such separation, and the forbearance which the christian ought to exercise rather than allow it to take place, the apostle suggests to them what an influence a christian wife might exercise by means of her deportment and holy walk over a heathen husband; how does she know but that God might thus make her the instrument of salvation to her husband? Or a christian husband, how can he tell whether it may not please God to employ him in a similar manner as the instrument of converting his unbelieving wife? At all events, every christian, in the difficult circumstances in which he may be placed by the change resulting from his conversion, must so conduct himself as God shall have been pleased to assign him his situation in life. This was the rule which the apostle had established, wherever he had been the means of gathering a church.

This latter remark led the apostle to refer to another of those points, upon which the Corinthians appear to have asked counsel of him in the letter already alluded to. It appears to have been a question at Corinth, how far the renunciation of the Jewish covenant of circumcision should extend, when a Jew became a christian. The

apostle decides, that the fact of having received circumcision should, in such a case, be considered as a matter indifferent. When a Jew became converted, his circumcision was no more to be thought of; when a Gentile became converted, the Jewish rite was not to be administered. In fact neither the external rite, nor the absence of it, is the essential point in the covenant to which it is the seal; the true object being such a subduing of the heart of the individual to God as produces obedience to his expressed will.

The question concerning the condition of household slaves, was another matter which presented some difficulty in the church at Corinth; and this the apostle proceeds to determine. Every man on his conversion was to continue in the same condition of life in this respect, as before his joining the church. Amongst the Greeks the household duties were performed by slaves, and it was no uncommon thing for their masters to give them their freedom, and thus they became what was called *freedmen*. When a slave was called to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, the apostle desired him not to be over anxious nor oppressed by a sense of his condition, as though it were disgraceful. If indeed it should be in his power to obtain his freedom, he would do well to take advantage of the opportunity, and to be made free. Still in any case, when a slave becomes a christian, in one sense he may be called the *freedman* of the Lord, for when Christ makes the soul free, then is the man free indeed (John viii. 36); while, on the other hand, every one who having his freedom becomes a christian, enters thereby into the service of Christ. Slaves are purchased with money by men, and we have been bought with a price, even with the price of His own blood, which the Lord Jesus has paid for us. Belonging thus to him, our obedience to earthly masters must be secondary to our service to him; and thus we must not willingly become the slaves of men. Having thus explained the case, the apostle repeats the direction with which he began this branch of the subject, by desiring that every one upon becoming a christian should remain in his own position in society, remembering that in so doing he must continue in the service of God.

APPLICATION.

39. Though the delicate subject which occupies the beginning of this portion arises in connexion with the exhortations Paul had just given them, it is distinguished by the important difference, that, however loose the morals and customs of Corinthian society, the condition he now speaks of is the remedy for the sin of which he had previously treated; for which reason the Applications No. 28 (page 70), and No. 38 (page 89) might profitably be read as a preparation for applying the present portion. These applications will be enough to suggest one important ground for those arguments, by which the apostle urges that it is the duty of husbands and wives to interpose no obstacle to living together. But the apostle suggests other reasons for the exercise of great forbearance between married persons, in the event of disagreement on the most important subject of life. In a christian country, the broad distinctions of religion, which existed in Paul's time at Corinth find no place; and it should be matter of deep thankfulness to God, that the habits of christian society leave little room even for the application of the principle which is here set forth. It is not necessary now to suppose the case of open infidels and opposers of the truth married together, one of whom becomes converted to christianity, the numerous instances of which gave occasion for the counsel of the apostle. And the public conduct and demeanour of married people who happen now to differ on religious subjects, is commonly regulated by that sense of propriety which obtains in a country, where all are received in society as that which they usually profess themselves to be—that is, as christians. Yet in the private current of domestic life, there may be many instances in which great need may exist for the application of the principles laid down in this portion—a need all the more pressing, because the sorrow and suffering are hidden, and constrained to be without such a vent as may draw forth sympathy and counsel. Though men and women marry with the open profession of being christians, it is not the less true, that in the cases of multitudes who thus bind themselves one to another for life by solemn vows, the vast change, which is in reality a spiritual conversion,

subsequently takes place upon one of the two; and so alters the motives, feelings, and affections of the converted one, that the unconverted one can no longer sympathize in that which constitutes the first principle of life in the other. In a vast number of such cases, the tender affections of the heart, and acknowledged duties, become the very sources of the most agonizing trial; and it needs all the power of divine grace, and all the impulse of the strong motives suggested by the apostle, to call into action that forbearance which is requisite under so abiding and so distressing a trial. Two motives are drawn from the great principle of love, in its application to those who, by the constitution of our nature, are most likely to draw it forth; and directed towards that in them which is the highest object of christian affection. If the soul of every fellow-creature should be valuable in the sight of a christian, how precious should the souls of wife and children be to a christian husband and a christian father: and if their temporal concerns and comforts ought to be considered as matters of sufficient importance to occupy his exertions, and call forth his diligence, how much more self-denying ought he to be as to securing their spiritual interests in the eternal state of glory with the Lord. The opportunity is afforded to a christian to exercise this self-denial, with this view, when the unhappy differences here referred to arise. When an unchristian husband rejects the word "which is able to save the soul," St. Peter bids the christian wife remember, that by a "chaste conversation coupled with fear," she may be made the means by which her husband may be "won without the word" (1 Pet. iii. 1, 2); and St. Paul suggests here the same course. Such a motive as this, supported by earnest prayer for wisdom and for help from on high, and rooted in the domestic affections of the heart, will stand many a shock that mere natural love would sink under; and would enable a husband or a wife to exhibit an amount of forbearance and patience which would produce, by God's blessing, the effect hoped for. The other motive relates to the condition of the children of such a union. The circumstances of a christian country make the result referred to by the apostle inapplicable in the present day, so far as

regards the baptism of the infant offspring. The nominal profession of christianity by the parents justifies the church in receiving the children as members, by infant baptism. But though this may have been included amongst the privileges and blessings referred to by the apostle, as those of which the children would be deprived, in the case of such a mixed marriage as he speaks of, yet as the essential point is not baptism, but holiness in its effectual sense, the words "else were your children unclean, but now are they holy," directs the mind to an application which may be easily adapted to the difficulties that too frequently occur at present. A contrary course to that here recommended would expose the children to all the evils, resulting from the sight of angry passions; and would prevent the possibility of parental influence being engaged on the side of spiritual truth, and leave the heart open to all those devices of Satan, that would harden it against the holy influence of spiritual religion. Of how many children will it be said at the end "now are they holy" through the evidence of the power of true religion, which has been manifested in the patient forbearance of one christian parent applied by the Holy Spirit to the heart! How many will be found to be "unclean," whose natural enmity against God has ripened into active evil, under a constant exhibition of ungodly differences between parents, in which the one who talks of spiritual religion has not exercised the sound wisdom urged in this portion by the apostle.

40. The second subject included in this portion is likewise inapplicable, in its precise circumstances, to the condition of the church at the present time; but the principle, which the apostle applies to the disregard of Jewish rites after christian baptism, admits of an adaptation to the failings of infirm human nature at all times. "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing" may be quoted to shew, that a superstitious regard to the outward ordinance, however highly sanctioned that ordinance may be, is inconsistent with the scriptural requirement as regards ordinances and forms. They are all meant to be vehicles and means of spiritual benefit, adapted to the

necessities and weaknesses of human nature; and if the spiritual object be not attained, or having been attained at the proper time is no longer sought for and expected, the outward act or thing "is nothing," and becomes therefore a means of delusion if it is thought to be something. In a certain sense this will apply to every act of merely formal religion; and it should lead us to be more jealous over ourselves, and watchful over our hearts, lest we should insensibly grow into that state of mind which allows the outward rite of baptism, or the Lord's Supper, to take that place in our personal religion, which ought to be occupied by "the keeping of the commandments of God;"—a danger to which incautious christians are greatly exposed in the present day.

41. The same remark as that on the previous point may be made concerning the directions of the apostle, with reference to the conduct of christian slaves. The application cannot be made to the precise circumstances, at the present day, in our christian country; for, through the mercy of God, there are no persons in the precise position of the household slaves of Corinth. But the fact that our household servants are free to leave the service, in which they may find themselves uncomfortable, enables such to apply more fully the principle of Paul's counsel; because by being more capable of acting, they are more responsible for acting according to christian principles. A servant who has become spiritually converted, and brought under the new motives of the gospel, is not therefore under the necessity of leaving the service of the master, in whose family he fulfilled his duties before the occurrence of his great change. He must not indeed become "the servant of men" in such a sense as will force him to obey man, in anything contrary to God's command. "No man can serve two masters" whose commands are contrary to each other; and to continue in the service of any one, who requires an obedience which offends God, would be to reject God's service. But so long as a human master asks only what a servant of God can perform with "a conscience void of offence," he is not only to be obeyed, but a christian should render that obedience in the spirit of humility,

which may prove to his master, that his increased desire to serve God only makes him more diligent and respectful in his position. The liberty wherewith Christ makes us free is a liberty to fulfil those duties cheerfully and readily, as unto God, which might be burdensome and distressing, while we were under the bondage of sin; and thus it is that "the Lord's freeman" becomes a better servant to an earthly master; and that a master who becomes a christian, "being free" from the necessity of personal service, conducts himself towards those below him in society as knowing that he himself is the servant of Christ.

QUESTIONS.

How can the principle laid down by the apostle, with reference to differences between husband and wife, be applied to any circumstances in which I am placed? Do I so apply them as to promote the conversion of others, by the evidence of the power of Christ in my own conduct?

How do I know that I am not more anxious as to the outward acts of religious observance, than to the reality of spiritual life of which they are meant to be the signs?

If I have any who are over me, with the power to command my services, how do I conduct myself towards them? Do they perceive that I am really a christian, by the humility of my demeanour, and my diligence in duty? Or do I look down upon my masters, as thinking they know less than I do of religion?

THE PRAYER.

Merciful God, who hast shewn me such mercy as to bring me to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, grant me the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that I may value that great blessing above all things. And feeling for the condition of those who are without that knowledge savingly, grant that I may deny myself, and in every relation of life may be so forbearing, and so desirous of the souls of others, that nothing may make me forego the hope of being made the instrument of thy mercy to those who are within my influence. Make my light so to shine before men, that they may see my good works, and glorify my Father in heaven; and whether it be as husband or wife, parent or child, master or servant, make me to serve thee in fulfilling the duties to which thou callest me. Grant this for Jesus' sake, our Lord and Saviour. AMEN.

TENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS VII. 25—40.

INDEX WORDS.	
Concerning marriage.	25 NOW concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: YET I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be
why not marry	26 faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress [or, *necessity*], *I say*, that *it*
not alter state	27 *is* good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.
no sin to marry	28 BUT and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned.
but trouble	NEVERTHELESS such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.
suit state to the time	29 BUT this I say, brethren, the time *is* short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives
	30 be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed
	31 not; and they that use this world, as not abusing *it*: for the fashion of this world passeth away.
Balance between unmarried	32 BUT I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord [*of the Lord*], how he may please the Lord:
married	33 BUT he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.
unmarried	34 There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit:
married	BUT she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband.
why rather unmarried	35 AND this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, BUT for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.
why married	36 BUT if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the

flower of *her* age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

judgment

37 NEVERTHELESS he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

as to the married

38 SO THEN he that giveth *her* in marriage doeth well;

as to the unmarried

BUT he that giveth *her* not in marriage doeth better.

as to widows remarrying

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

40 BUT she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

EXPLANATION.

The apostle returns to the subject of the propriety or impropriety of marriage; or rather he refers to a particular branch of that subject, which had most probably been distinctly brought before him, in the letter from the Corinthians to which he was now replying. He had given some important directions respecting the conduct of married people towards each other; but now with regard to the course that ought to be pursued by single persons as to marrying, he was not authorized to establish any general rule, as of authority from the Lord. Paul however stated his own view on the subject, as the judgment of one who, by divine grace, had been made partaker of the christian faith. The opinion he had formed led him to consider, that in the then existing state of the church of Christ, when there were so many urgent afflictions pressing upon christians, it was wise for single people to continue in their unmarried condition. The apostle did not say that the condition of celibacy was so important at the time, that persons were to dissolve their existing matrimonial ties;—quite the contrary. He tells the Corinthian church, that a married christian was to take no steps whatever towards procuring a divorce; while at the same time he adds, that an unmarried christian had better not think of marrying. Yet marriage was not forbidden; and a christian young man or woman would not be committing sin by contracting a marriage: they would how-

ever be exposing themselves to much inconvenience and distress, with respect to those things which relate to the natural affections and feelings connected with our present state. The apostle however forbore to press this subject upon them, not desiring to hurt them.

After all, the main point was to reflect, that there was but little time to prepare for the great crisis which, from other passages of Paul's writings also we have reason to believe he expected to be near at hand. (1 Thess. iv. 15. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.) The time was short, and those who were looking for the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. iii. 20, 21) ought to be able to live so loosened from the bonds and occupations of the worldly condition, that the married should be as free from spiritual hindrance as the unmarried,—that the afflicted should be as though they had no worldly sorrow—the prosperous, as though they had no worldly prosperity—the merchant, as though he had no gain—and in short, that those who were engaged in any way in worldly occupation, should give themselves no more than was needful to their temporal concerns, avoiding all excess in the following of their proper calling, acting under the conviction, that all the gain and glory and outward shew belonging to this world will be changed and pass away. (2 Pet. iii. 11—14.)

While however this was the state of mind to be desired and cultivated by christians, the apostle knew the weakness of human nature, and he wished them to be without those sources of care that would naturally produce anxiety amidst the dangers of the times. A single man was in a condition to devote all his care and attention to the spiritual concerns of his soul, giving himself entirely to the duty of pleasing the Lord; a married man on the other hand had to attend to worldly matters which might involve much care, and the more so as he would desire to gratify his wife in these things. So also with reference to the other sex, the same distinction may be made between a married and an unmarried woman. A single woman may devote herself, body soul and spirit to the Lord's service, in holiness of life, and attention to religious duties; but a married woman must have many cares and duties in her family, connected with the matters of this life, in which

she is bound to please her husband. The object of the apostle in giving this counsel was to promote the good of the christians at Corinth, and not in any way intending to ensnare them into a bondage, by which as of necessity, they might feel themselves bound not to marry. He only desired to shew them what seemed most fitting and proper for the peculiar requirements of the times; and how they might be able to devote themselves to their religious duties without having their minds drawn aside by the pressure of various claims and feelings.

From the direct application of his advice to unmarried persons concerning their own conduct, Paul passed to a reference to the conduct of those who had the responsible charge of young women, as parents or guardians. In the ordinary circumstances of society, marriage was not only deemed honorable, but a certain amount of reproach was generally cast upon women who did not marry; and the parent who should refuse to allow his daughter to marry, might seem to incur blame for bringing this shame upon her. The apostle says that any parent, feeling this to be the case, was entirely free to act upon his convictions. If his daughter was passing the period of life when young women commonly marry, and any proper occasion required his decision, he would be committing no sin in allowing the marriage to take place. On the other hand, a christian father, having made up his mind as to the propriety of the course, and not being called upon by any particular attachment of his daughter's, or other circumstances to allow her to marry; not being bound in any manner which would prevent him from doing as he pleased, when he determined, to retain his daughter in his family in her maiden condition, he acts wisely. The apostle sums up this part of his advice by saying in short, that a father who gave his daughter in marriage would be doing well, but that one who kept her at home unmarried would be doing better.

There was yet another point in connexion with the subject to which the apostle adverted,—it related to second marriages. Whatever were the circumstances of a wife, (on some of which he had already written, verses 10—16, see page 94), she was legally bound during the lifetime of

her husband. Upon the death of her husband, she was free to do as she might judge best, as to contracting a second marriage. If she thought it right to marry, she must unite herself however only to a person with whom she could be joined in Christ; a christian woman could marry none but a christian man, whatever may have been her duty when she was converted, having been previously married to a heathen. Her subsequent marriage must be "only in the Lord." While however Paul conceded this liberty to a widow, he gave it as his opinion that she would be in a happier condition if she continued in her widowhood; and in declaring this as his own judgment, the apostle said he thought too that it concurred with the mind of the Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION.

42. This portion refers to the subject of marriage in a different point of view from that in which it was considered in the preceding. The several duties of persons who were already in the married state were treated of, and the eligibility of entering in that state was only introduced with reference to the necessity for avoiding the alternative which might result to those who were not specially gifted as Paul was. Now however the subject is more largely considered, with respect to other reasons that are to be taken into consideration, in order to decide as to the propriety of changing from the single to the married state. The apostle dissuades the Corinthian christians from marrying, under the circumstances of distress in which the church at that time was. Some notion of the nature and degree of that distress may be gathered from what Paul had already mentioned as the sufferings of "the apostles last, as it were, appointed to death: for they were made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." (1 Cor. iv. 9.) No wonder then that he should advise those who were exposed to sufficient anxiety on their own account, to avoid so great an addition to that anxiety as must result from the feeling naturally arising on behalf of those so dear to the heart—a wife and children, under such circumstances. It was wiser to forbear to contract those tender ties, than to gratify the heart at so great a

sacrifice to all who were bound by the connexion. It must be very plain that peaceable times, in which christianity is the established religion of the country, can afford no parallel with the circumstances that drew forth the apostle's counsel; and it is equally plain that the course advised by him rests solely upon that "present distress" to which he alludes. He has in other parts of his letter sufficiently confirmed the declaration afterwards made in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that "marriage is honourable in all" (Heb. xiii. 4); and in this very passage he shews that they who marry have not sinned in so doing. But though the case could not exist when no *general* "present distress" gave grounds for such counsel as that here recorded, there may be *particular* instances in which the same rule may apply; and such would occur whenever persons act upon the strong impulse of present feelings, and contract a marriage with all its attendant consequences of domestic expenses, without having a reasonable prospect of obtaining the means of support, by which such expenses could be honestly defrayed. The distress that such a step involves—the carefulness of thought—the anxiety of heart, and the actual suffering it produces, stand in the place of those external distresses, which, in the apostle's time, arose from the persecution which christians brought upon themselves; and they render his advice powerfully applicable in restraining the inconsiderate impetuosity, which might induce young people to marry in spite of the consequences which result from imprudent marriages. If a christian heartily desires to "attend upon the Lord," he must look forward, and consider that to do so "without distraction" would be impossible, under the circumstances of a marriage without the prospect of a supply adequate to the necessities of a wife and children; and before he takes an irrevocable step of this kind, he will calmly count the cost, both to himself, and to those who become the dearest objects of his affections, not omitting to include in that calculation of the cost, the loss his own soul may suffer from being incapacitated from "attending upon the Lord without distraction."

43. The passage before us throws great light upon the

duty of parents, with respect to the withholding or conceding their sanction to the marriages that may be desired by their children. With the parental power is associated a proportionate amount of parental responsibility;—both these are recognized by the apostle. All that has been brought forward in guiding the mind with respect to forming a marriage union personally, ought to be taken into consideration as regards those, whose interests are committed to a parent's charge; and judging for those, as for themselves, parents are bound to use their power under a lively sense of their responsibility likewise. To refuse the parental sanction without an adequate reason, is not only sin in him who arbitrarily misuses his power, but it makes him also partaker of whatever sin may result from his refusal. To grant the parental sanction to that union which God's word does not sanction, is to involve himself in the consequences, both as regards the sin and the misery that may follow. Scarcely any action of a parent's duty calls for more wisdom and more firmness, than that which decides the course of his children's life ever after. Much self-denial is required whatever way a parent decides, and all those graces necessary for such a work must be earnestly sought in prayer.

44. It is impossible to pass over this passage without adverting to the manner, in which the Romanists employ the advice here given by the apostle, to establish the supposed merit of a life of celibacy, and to enforce the necessity of remaining unmarried upon the priests of their communion. That which Paul suggests, as the better course under "the present distress," is assumed in the doctrines of Romanism to be the best course under all circumstances; and the statement that they who marry do not thereby sin, is altogether put aside in order to establish their unscriptural dogmas. Men and women are taught that they perform a work of peculiar merit, by taking vows to remain unmarried all their lives; and that they greatly sin in shrinking from taking such vows, when they have entered into the preparation for thus binding themselves. In drawing attention to this point, it is in these days important to observe how the doctrines of error

are grafted upon the word of truth. It is the constant endeavour of the subtle enemy to keep men in bondage, by giving at least the appearance of scriptural authority to the dogmas put forward to bewilder their minds. The necessity for scriptural sanction is entirely superseded, amongst the Romanists, by the exaltation of the authority of what they call the church; and thus no scripture is referred to upon some of their doctrines; yet whenever a plausible opportunity is found, they gladly put forward texts that seem to give a sanction to others. Whenever scripture is quoted as authority by the Romanists, it will be necessary to make a careful reference to the passage with all its context; and in almost every case it will be found, that a fair interpretation of the scripture will take away all the warrant for which it is employed by Romish writers. The present passage is an instance of this kind. The advice given by the apostle is grounded upon circumstances not necessarily connected with the general principle upon which the subject of marriage rests; and at the same time that he affords this special advice, he states the general rule in such a manner as entirely removes the ground for which the Romanists would bring it forward. No warrant can fairly be drawn from the whole passage for depreciating marriage, or classing those as inferior in grace and holiness who, in ordinary circumstances, judge it right to marry. Neither can the vows of nuns and monks find the smallest justification from what the apostle here counsels. "The present distress" in any individual's case, may be a good reason for following the apostolic advice and remaining unmarried during the continuance of that hindrance, whatever it may be; but this is very different from the bondage of an oath, by which the individual determines that whatever circumstances may hereafter arise, marriage shall become a sin. It is by such means as this, that Satan prepares the soul for those future assaults in which he induces his victims to be continually heaping up wrath against the day of wrath.

45. There sometimes exists a refinement of feeling which, when encouraged, leads the mind to revolt from second marriages, with a repugnance which ought only to be felt

towards that which partakes of the nature of sin. This is very different from the feeling under which the apostle ruled, that when a women's "husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will;" and the counsel he offers to widows is stated with a tenderness which leaves this permissive declaration without any restriction of reproach upon those who might not think it necessary to follow the advice. He says that according to his judgment, she would be *happier* by continuing unmarried, which is very different from being *holier*; and this point of difference is rendered the more important, because he adds that he thinks in forming that judgment he has the Spirit of God. It would be a matter for much more serious consideration whether or not to contract a second marriage, if by so doing a person would be acting contrary to the judgment of the apostle, that the widowed state was the safer as regards holiness and spiritual life. But nothing of this kind is involved in the opinion Paul expresses. He speaks only of the results in the happiness which may be enjoyed in this life, and he judges that more of this happiness may be attained in the widowed state, than by marrying again. While he may be right in this opinion, it may by possibility be also true, that the holiness of a widowed individual may be advanced by marrying again, even though a less amount of present happiness may be the result; and so, while Paul might have had the Spirit of God while declaring his opinion on the general question, it may be the special work of the same Spirit to sanction second marriages in multitudes of individual cases. These considerations ought to modify the opinions of those who might be disposed to regard second marriages with disapprobation, and by confining the feeling within the limits of a private judgment on the matter, they would make room for the exercise of a larger charity, in which second marriages might be regarded as means of promoting holiness amongst christians, however they might tend to diminish the happiness that might be enjoyed by them in this life.

46. The last application was limited in the closing sentence to "christians:" and not only the particular case

of second marriages, but the whole subject must be considered as applying to the union of christians with christians in the bond of matrimony. "Only in the Lord" is the apostolical limitation, beyond which neither the general rule nor the special advice has any reference. When the nature of the marriage tie is considered—the strong manner in which the unity of the parties is described in scripture, "they two shall be one flesh" (Eph. v. 31. Gen. ii. 24)—the influence that one must have with the other, as experience proves—the identity of interests it involves—everything concurs to convince the judgment, that a difference of feeling upon the one subject which most essentially affects the soul is wholly incompatible with either the duties or the happiness of the married state. For one therefore who is spiritually converted, and has experienced that wonderful change by which old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God (2 Cor. v. 17, 18), and whose affections are set on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. iii. 3. Rom. viii. 5—9), to attempt to enter into that union which makes two to be one, with a person who has not experienced that change, in whom old things have not passed away, and whose affections are set on the things on the earth—this seems to be a step which no reasonable person would think it possible to take. Yet it constantly happens that marriages of this kind are formed, in which the spiritual christian finds out the grievous consequences when too late, and the unconverted partner too becomes sensible of the great mistake that has been made. It affords one of the most remarkable evidences of the impulses of our fallen affections, and of their power to confuse the judgment. It is so easy to follow the current that is agreeable to one towards whom that personal interest which looks forward to marriage is awakened, and things that would naturally be distasteful are seen in such a different light under those circumstances, that a consenting respect for religious truth readily appears to be prominent on the part of one, and is readily assumed by the other to be a spiritual influence. Vast numbers have been thus betrayed into miserable marriages, by not reflecting upon the apostle's limitation, "only in the

Lord," at the earliest stage of the attraction which leads to marriage. A christian can only be safe in this respect who refuses to allow the thought to make a lodgment in the mind, of marrying any particular person who had not manifested an evidence of being "in the Lord" before the rise of that state of feeling which made the interest personal. They who desire to be really united in holy matrimony, so that their marriage may promote their holiness, should take care to ascertain that they have already been spiritually united in the Lord—only in the Lord.

47. The apostle puts the whole point of the subject forward when he sums up the general character of his advice as connected with the shortness of time and the passing nature of "the fashion of this world." A right understanding of this will ensure a proper application of the principles he sets forth. The christian character can only be rightly formed under a sense of the rapid progress of all worldly things, towards that grand crisis in which its present fashion will be altogether changed;—a christian looks not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen, for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. iv. 15.) In this point of view he regards all the surrounding objects, both those which may legitimately occupy his mind and heart, and those which are employed as snares to destroy his soul. Receiving many mercies he lives in that freedom from subjection to the enjoyment of them, that he can feel Christ Jesus to be his happiness without them, and can hold them so as not to be holden by them, enchained to the state in this life in which they are possessed. There must be a loosening from the world, which includes a capacity to possess what God gives, as though we possessed it not, and to make use of every good thing within our reach in such a manner as may "let our moderation be known unto all men," feeling that "the Lord is at hand." (Phil. iv. 5.) In this state of mind, and in this sense, those christians who are most happy in their husbands or wives will be as though they had none; and those that are in sorrow as though they had no cause

for grief; and they that are in prosperity as though their worldly advantages were nothing; and those whose affairs required the purchase of goods, would sit altogether loose from that which they possessed, using this world only for the present needful purposes, but avoiding all such excess of enjoyment as a cleaving to the things we are permitted to enjoy implies.

QUESTIONS.

How have I acted as to any case in which I may have been interested with reference to marriage? Have the principles that ruled my conduct been such as are according to the apostle's counsel?

Are my opinions concerning the marriage of others regulated by the charity that marks the apostle's opinions? Do I judge any to have done wrong in marrying, from my own views on the subject rather than from scriptural rules?

Have I forwarded or sanctioned any marriage between parties, one of whom is spiritual and the other is not?

Am I so loosened from the engrossing affection of worldly ties and objects, that I am able to use this world and all the means which God bestows on me, and yet not to abuse them by idolatry or by excess?

THE PRAYER.

O God, who hast consecrated the state of matrimony to such an excellent mystery, that in it is signified and represented the spiritual marriage and unity betwixt Christ and his Church; grant me a right understanding of thy heavenly will in this holy appointment. Give me a right understanding in all things, and especially grant that I may be filled with the spirit of charity; that I may never assume evil to exist in any marriage between those who may differ from me concerning what is or is not fitting in such matters. Give me a spirit of faithfulness, to be ready to warn any of my fellow-christians who may be tempted to marry with any one who is not in the Lord. Have mercy upon all such as are suffering from such a false step in their christian course, and spare them, gracious Lord. Visit them not according to their deservings; but in thy great love and mercy touch the hearts of those, with whom they have ventured to unite themselves, so that thy name

may be glorified in their conversion. And, I beseech thee, draw my heart so powerfully to thy heavenly love, and give me so bright a hope of the glory that shall be revealed in the inheritance of the saints in light, that I may never cling to any of the gifts with which thou hast blessed me in this life; but that, not abusing this world or any of its blessings by excess of affection or enjoyment, I may ever use them all to thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. AMEN.

ELEVENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS VIII.

INDEX WORDS.	VIII.
As to idol-offerings	1 NOW as touching things offered unto idols, "we know that we all have knowledge."
viewed by knowledge	Knowledge puffeth up,
by charity	BUT charity edifieth.
knowledge ignorant	2 AND if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.
charity approved	3 BUT if any man love God, the same is known of him.
An idol	4 As concerning THEREFORE the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, "we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and
	5 that *there is* none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)
The true God	6 BUT to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him [or, *for him*]; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him."
A weak conscience	7 HOWBEIT *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

rectifying knowledge

8 "BUT meat commendeth us not to God: FOR neither, if we eat, are we the better [or, *have we the more*]; neither, if we eat not, are we the the worse [or, *have we the less*]."

knowledge cautioned

9 BUT take heed lest by any means this liberty [or, *power*] of your's become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

10 FOR if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened [or, *edified*] to eat those things which are offered to idols;

11 AND through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

12 BUT when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

Charity

13 WHEREFORE, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

EXPLANATION.

Paul now turns to another of the subjects which had been laid before him for advice in the letter from the Corinthians. (1 Cor. vii. 1; see page 92.) In a state of society in which christians were under the necessity of living amongst heathens, having themselves also been brought up in heathen superstition, great difficulties must have arisen from the idolatrous habits which were mixed up with almost every circumstance of ordinary life. One fertile source of difficulty was connected with the manner of making use of the flesh of the animals, which were sacrificed in the temples of idols. These animals were usually apportioned in three divisions. A part of the flesh was consumed on the altar of the idol, another part became the perquisite of the officiating priest, and a third part was returned to the person who offered the sacrifice. The priest commonly sold the greater part of his portion, which thus found its way into the public market; the same perhaps might happen with much of the meat that belonged to the offerer; except that it was customary after the sacrifice to have a feast in the temple (and sometimes at the offerer's own house), to which his friends were invited as guests; and the remainder of the sacrificed animal was thus consumed in honor of the deity to which the offering had been made.

The Corinthian church was composed of converts from amongst the Jews, and from amongst the pagan idolaters. The former entertained the most lively abhorrence of the least connection with idolatry; and the latter, having been brought up in the habits of an idolatrous people, were too ready to find excuses for tolerating what they had been familiar with all their lives. The consequence was, that various and extreme opinions were maintained on both sides. Some christians were jealous of the smallest approach to what might seem to countenance the worship of false gods; whilst others were over liberal in their judgment of any conduct supposed to do this. In this state of things then, the church at Corinth had submitted the subject for the counsel of St. Paul.

With respect then to the use of meat from animals which have been part of pagan sacrifices, of course, (says the apostle) as christians we must all very well know the principle of the matter. But having assumed this general knowledge on the part of professing christians, he introduces a solemn precept for the guidance of christian practice, which he conveyed in a short and powerful sentence. "Knowledge puffeth up"—inflates—swells the thoughts of self with unsound conceits: "but charity edifieth;"—love *builds up* (as the original word expresses) —enlarges the heart, as by solid building on a good foundation. He explains the application of this aphorism. If any person conceives, that he possesses such a complete knowledge of any matter (more especially on the points in question) as would justify him in enforcing his opinion as a rule of judgment for others, that person has not yet acquired any such true knowledge, as a christian ought to possess. But on the other hand, if a person has the love of God freely shed abroad in his heart, that person does not magnify his own knowledge, but is known, accepted, and acknowledged of God, who will lead him into all truth. (John xiv. 26; xvi. 13.)

The apostle proceeds to apply this precept to the subject of the liberty or restraint of a christian, as to eating meat which had been part of a sacrifice to any heathen idol. It is well known by christians that a heathen deity, of whom images were made, has in fact no existence; and

that there is none but the supreme and Almighty Being, who is really God. There are numbers indeed to which the name of a god is given, both as supposed to be in heaven and of a heavenly character (such as Jupiter, &c.), and as imagined to belong to the earth, on which they were classed as demi-gods—heroes, who were honored as lords—tutelary deities—Baalim in the Hebrew—(such as Hercules, &c.): of these there were an endless variety. But to christians there could be but one only God, the Father—the Creator and Source of all things. He in whom the life of christians is hid (Col. iii. 3), and one only Lord—the Lord Jesus Christ—by whom all things were created (John i. 1—3. Col. i. 16—19), and by whom christians receive the life of the Spirit to be joined to him. But though this was undoubtedly true, it was not every christian that was really aware of this truth. Some, who having been originally pagans, used formerly to believe in the existence of the gods represented by the idols, had not entirely overcome the power of early impressions; even after they were converted, they so felt concerning the supposed deity, that when they partook of any meat which had been part of a sacrifice in a heathen temple, they had in spite of themselves a feeling of regard to the god, as if there were really such a being. And thus their consciences, not being guided by a just perception of right and wrong, were burthened and self-condemned, as not being void of offence in the matter.

But (it might be said) the mere eating of meat has nothing to do with our favourable position in the sight of God. Our eating any particular meat does not give us any advantage with Him; and our abstaining does not produce any disadvantage. To this the apostle replies, by allowing that such is the case: but then he bids the christian who makes use of such an argument to be careful, lest the practical freedom resulting from such an opinion should become the means, by which those who do not feel the same liberty of conscience might be ensnared into sin. Suppose a person with this kind of morbid conscience should happen to see one who possessed that greater liberty, sitting amongst the guests of some pagan who had sacrificed an animal, and was regaling his friends in

the idol's temple with the remainder of the food; what would be the effect upon him? His conscience had before been burthened with a sense of wrong, in having done honor to the false god; but now that he saw the other example, he would be confirmed and built up in a course which he conscientiously considered sinful; and he would go on in the custom of eating of the idolatrous sacrifices, in spite of the superstitious feeling with which he performed such an act. Thus the effect of the knowledge of one brother whose conscience was strong would be this, that another brother, one of those for whom Christ died, but whose conscience was weak, might be drawn into presumptuous sin, and lose his soul. Now when any one thus spiritually injures weaker christians, by hurting their consciences in this manner, the offence is in fact against Christ himself. The apostle sums up the application of his argument, and renders it more striking and effective by taking it to himself personally. If (he said) his eating any kind of flesh, were to be the occasion of drawing a christian brother into sin, he would not taste a morsel of meat at any time to the very world's end; rather than be the cause of a brother's offending God.

APPLICATION.

The Applications of this portion will be made much clearer, by including the personal application of the subject which the apostle himself makes in the ninth chapter; so that they are deferred until that passage is explained, and will be given after the explanation of the next portion.

TWELFTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS IX.

INDEX WORDS.	IX.
Paul's claim.	1 Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?
appeal to *them*	2 IF I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.
	3 Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,
claim for support for himself and for a wife	4 Have we not power to eat and to drink?
	5 Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife [or, *woman*], as well as other apostles, and *as* the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?
without labour	6 OR I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?
reasonableness of this	7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?
Scriptural ground	8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law
	9 the same also? FOR it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.
how applied	10 Doth God take care for oxen? OR saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.
to *them*	11 IF we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal
	12 things? IF others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather?
privilege given up	NEVERTHELESS we have not used this power; BUT suffer all things,
why	LEST we should hinder the gospel of Christ.
	13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live [or, *feed*] *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are
	14 partakers with the altar? EVEN so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

15 BUT I have used none of these things: NEITHER have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: FOR *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

Duty to preach — 16 FOR though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

willing — 17 FOR if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward:

or unwilling — BUT if against my will, a dispensation *of the gospel* is committed unto me.

Reward — 18 What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

free — 19 FOR though I be free from all *men*,

how bound — yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

21 to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

why — 23 AND this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*.

general application — 24 Know ye not THAT they which run in a race run all, BUT one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 AND every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. NOW they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

personal application. — 26 I THEREFORE so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 BUT I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: LEST THAT by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

EXPLANATION.

Having at the close of the last portion applied to himself the argument that it was better for a christian to deny

himself even any lawful thing rather than be the occasion of leading a christian into sin, Paul proceeds to carry out this personal application more fully. In order to do this he first establishes his own right, in order to shew the power of the motive for which he forbore to make use of his right. He appealed to the Corinthians and asked them, whether as an Apostle he had not full liberty to do whatever a christian in his circumstances might lawfully do. It appears however that there were some persons at Corinth, who attempted to depreciate his claim to be an apostle; and therefore as he proceeds he justifies that claim. He had seen the Lord Jesus Christ personally; probably he brought this forward, because it had been suggested that he had not been (like the twelve apostles) eye-witnesses of the Lord's ministry. (Acts i. 21—26.) Paul however *had been* personally appointed an apostle by the Lord Jesus, and had seen him in his glory. (Acts ix.; xxvi. 15—18.) And that same Lord had employed Paul as an apostle in Corinth, for the purpose of gathering as a church there the very people to whom he was writing. If any other body of christians should refuse to acknowledge him as an apostle, yet there could be no doubt of his being such to the christians at Corinth; for by their conversion through his ministry, God had as it were set the seal upon his appointment to the apostleship. This was the apology and justification which he pleaded to those who presumed to sit in judgment on his claim.

Then the apostle returned to the subject, from which this justification had detained him. Had not they equal right with others to marry? and in journeying from place to place for the purpose of conveying the gospel, had they not a right to expect that their wants should be supplied? Might not Paul act thus as well as the other apostles, and as those who are called our Lord's brothers, (whether children of his own mother, or his cousins, Mark vi. 3. John ii. 12), and as the apostle Peter. [From the manner in which Paul introduces a reference to these persons, it may be inferred that they were both married and took their wives with them in their missionary journeys. Peter we know to have been a married man, Matt. viii. 14.]

Or was there any special reason for excepting Paul and Barnabas (who had been associated with him on the first missionary expedition, sent forth by the Holy Ghost from Antioch, Acts xiii. 1—3) from the general rule that "the labourer is worthy of his hire;" so that they only of all the christian missionaries must provide for their own wants by their own labour, and have no right to expect support.

Having thus shewn the right to the support he claimed, Paul now proceeds to point out the reasonableness of their claim. What soldier was expected to serve in the army at his own expense? What husbandman performed the service by which the earth yielded her fruits—or what shepherd tended the flock of milch-goats without receiving for their wages a share in the fruits and in the milk? The apostle did not put this forth as a new doctrine of his own; it was distinctly implied in the Old Testament; the law of Moses specially required such a course of justice to the labourer. In the book of Deuteronomy (chap. xxv. 4) it is written, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox, when he treadeth out the corn." Was it to be supposed, that this command had reference merely to the animal which was used in threshing the wheat? By no means. It was evidently intended figuratively to represent the labour of man in whatever he might be engaged that was beneficial to his fellow men: in order that the labourer whilst engaged with the plough at the first occupation of husbandry, might have a reasonable expectation of personal benefit to encourage him; and while occupied in performing the last act of labour by which the corn becomes fit for man's use—the threshing—might still work in hope that he was to partake of the advantages of his labour. This application is equally true, when applied to labour of a spiritual kind. If the apostle had occupied his time in imparting to the Corinthians the blessings of spiritual life, could this be considered of so little value, that it was to be looked upon as a great payment, to supply him with what was necessary for the support of natural life?

The apostle again refers to his own personal connection with the Corinthians as rendering this claim the more just. Surely if this right was a general one which others might exercise in the church at Corinth, the right of Paul,

who had been the instrument of first conveying the gospel to them, was more evident. They must be well aware that, in the old dispensation of the Mosaic law, the officers ministering in the affairs of religion were supported by the provision made for the temple service; the priests who attended at the altar received a portion of the food, which was brought by the people to be offered upon the altar. (Lev. vi. 6, 26; vii. 6. Num. v. 9, 10; xviii. 8—19. Deut. xviii. 1, &c.) In the same manner the Lord has appointed, that those who are engaged in preaching the gospel shall receive maintenance in the exercise of their ministry. Our Lord stated this, in his charge to the twelve apostles at the time of their ordination. (Matt. x. 10. Luke x. 7.)

Having thus established the reasonableness and the scriptural authority of the right to support for ministers of the gospel, the apostle goes on to enforce the duty of self-denial in the exercise of christian liberty, by the example of his own forbearance in this respect. He had not taken advantage of this right which he undoubtedly possessed: neither did he mention the subject now from a wish to receive any support from the Corinthian christians; on the contrary he would rather die (he said) than that any one should deprive him of the joy of having endeavoured to advance the cause of Christ by giving up his right in this matter. This self-denial of his was an occasion of rejoicing to him, as being his personal contribution to the furtherance of the gospel. His preaching that gospel was a matter in which he had no choice, it was a duty of the first necessity;—the result of not fulfilling this duty so placed upon him would be most disastrous to himself—woe to him if he did not preach the gospel. If indeed he fulfilled this duty with hearty good will, he might expect to be rewarded; but whether he did it willingly or not, he could not choose but do it, for the office of the preacher of the gospel was laid upon him, and he must discharge it. But how then could he obtain the reward of which he had spoken? What could he do to manifest such a willingness and readiness as should prove that his heart went along with his duty? Why this he could do,—having (as he had shewn) a right to claim a proper provision for his necessities

while preaching the gospel, he might fulfil that urgent duty without enforcing that just right—he might preach the gospel without requiring the support; and thus by not enforcing his claim to the utmost, he would plainly manifest by his forbearance that hearty good will which would ensure the reward.

And thus he had really acted. He was not bound to be the servant of any man; and yet he had devoted himself to the service of every man, in order that he might be the means of gathering more souls to Christ, to be his "crown of rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming." (1 Thess. ii. 19.) With this object he had adapted himself to the circumstances and feelings of various classes, so far as christian principle would allow him; that by this laborious self-devotion he might give more proof of his ready will in his appointed work. In addressing the gospel to the Jews, he had placed himself in the position of a Jew, that he might so preach to the Jews as to win them over to Christ. In addressing those who felt bound to fulfil all the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, he had adapted himself to their feelings (as upon the occasion of circumcising Timothy at Lystra, Acts xvi. 3), in order that he might gain those who thus felt. In preaching the gospel to the heathen, who were unacquainted with any law, and had only the light of the law of nature to guide them (Rom. ii. 12—15), he took care to speak to them without reference to revealed law (not however conducting himself as if he knew not the law of God, but living as obedient to the commands of Christ in the gospel); that, in order by this attention to their peculiar position, he might the more surely commend his mission to the ignorant heathen, and draw them to the salvation of the gospel. He followed the same rule, with reference to the different classes in each of these several divisions of mankind; and when he had to deal with those who were infirm and unenlightened, he accommodated himself to their weakness, that he might win their souls. In short he thus suited himself in every respect, consistently with the character of a christian, to the peculiar things and circumstances of all with whom he had to do; that, by making use of every possible means, he

might be the instrument of eternal salvation, at least to some. This course he pursued, that the gospel might extend and be successful, and that he might so act out its principles himself, as to receive its final benefit along with those to whom he delivered it.

As an illustration of the doctrine he had been explaining, Paul drew a comparison which was well adapted to the habits of the Corinthians. Corinth was celebrated for public games, to which multitudes resorted. Foot races and other athletic exercises formed part of these games. The christians at Corinth were well acquainted with the rules and customs of these games. They knew that, though a number of competitors ran in the race, the prize was gained by only one. Every believer ought so to conduct himself in what might be called the christian race, as that he might gain the prize set before him. Those who entered the lists in the public games went through a course of training for the contest. This obliged them to be abstemious, careful and attentive to rules, and constant in regular exercise of the kind in which they were to try their skill; the training included bodily abstinence of every kind. And yet the candidates for the games submitted to this discipline, with the hope of receiving a crown of perishable materials—a mere garland made of the leaves of a tree, which was the distinguishing honor of the victor. Christians have a different crown in view—an imperishable treasure, conferring everlasting joy. Since then the prize for which Paul looked was so infinitely higher, than that which produced the self-denial of the pagan candidates in the games, the apostle set forward on his race, not as if he could be careless in his efforts, or doubtful of the issue. Like the boxer in the Corinthian games), the apostle did not fight as one who was merely sparring; but on the contrary, he battled in earnest against his own body as an antagonist (an explanation of the phrase "keep under my body," which the Greek fully warrants), and made it thoroughly obedient to the Spirit of God. And this he did, lest any failure in his christian course should hinder his own salvation; and lest, while he had been carrying to others that gospel, by which they were purified and brought out as pure gold in the Lord's day, he might

himself still be found only as the dross which had been separated. (Jer.

APPLICATION.

48. The subject of the last portion, and that of the present, are so connected, and the one bears so forcibly upon the other, that it is better to combine the application of them together. The first point that suggests itself, is that which is placed by the apostle as a kind of text for the whole passage—"Knowledge (he says) puffeth up, but love buildeth up." The contrast presented in this saying is illustrated by all that follows. It might indeed be applied to every knowledge that man can possess; but it is enough to confine it here to that knowledge which is the subject of the apostle's argument—the knowledge of God, of his will, and of his worship. Spiritual knowledge by itself, acting upon the natural heart of man, gives a strong impulse to his pride. The love of self being the ruling principle of the corrupt heart, the acquirement of mere knowledge places a man in this respect above others who are less instructed, and therefore exalts him in his own conceit. He loves to manifest this superiority and to shew his knowledge, and readily finds reasons to justify its display: thus its tendency is to puff him up. When however the Holy Spirit, who is Love, possesses the heart, He teaches the christian to cultivate the love of God, and of those for whom Christ died, and to counteract the effects of self-love. Every exercise of love confirms and strengthens the power of the Spirit within the heart, and so the christian is built up in the solid acquirement of christian graces. He grows in real knowledge too; and especially he attains that better knowledge, without which all other may become useless. He learns to know when to bring his spiritual knowledge into use, and when to abstain from acting upon it—when to manifest it for the glory of God, and when to conceal it for the subduing of self and pride. This was the master knowledge, by which Paul counteracted the evil that might have resulted from an unloving exercise of his own liberty, in matters which the weaker brethren were not able to comprehend. But besides, it generally happens that those who imagine

themselves to be advanced in knowledge, lack that humility which is necessary to give power to every branch of knowledge; and so they "know nothing as they ought to know." The cultivation of the grace of humility is absolutely necessary to the beneficial influence of every degree of spiritual knowledge. Knowledge is here contrasted, not only with love generally and more particularly love to man, but also with love to God. Whatever may be the amount or deficiency of a man's knowledge, yet "if he love God" he is acknowledged by God, and received by Him as partaking of His Spirit. To love God necessarily involves that enlargement of heart which makes a man "love his brother also" (1 John iv. 20, 21); and this therefore is the means of that edification, or building up, which is a gift superior to the knowledge, upon which men naturally pride themselves. Thus it is that "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."

49. A particular branch of knowledge is here spoken of. Of course "we know that an idol is nothing in the world." Is this indeed so much a matter of course? It ought to be so; but the great deceiver has managed by his subtlety to render this knowledge but foolishness with many, who consider themselves christians because they are bound to a system in which the name of Christ is included. But that name is assumed, to represent a character entirely contrary to that which belongs to the true Christ; and the assumption of His name may therefore be considered as a cunning imposture. The Romanists bow down to images "with conscience of the idol unto this hour." When charged with worshipping images, they deny the charge; by declaring that the image is no object of worship at all, but that the act which they perform before the image is done in honor of the being represented by the image. It is however practically true, that a vast number of the poor ignorant population of Romish countries do actually pay their adorations to the thing of wood or stone or metal which they see with their eyes;, and that the priests do not endeavour to teach them differently. And yet, without openly justifying this gross and palpable idolatry, the defenders of the

Romish system declare that the adoration offered to the images of the saints cannot be classed as idolatry; because it is not addressed to the material statue, but to the being whom that statue represents. But this is the very ground upon which Paul accuses the heathen of idolatry;—that in their worship of images they had reference to a supposed being, and not to the stock or stone which was before their eyes. And so inveterate was the feeling, that some who had received the knowledge of Christ, and had been joined to His church, had "conscience of the idol"—a notion of the power of the idol's being worshipped, even after having made their christian profession. The images, to which the pagans of Corinth paid their devotions, were in some instances the supposed representatives of imaginary beings that had never any existence; but many of these "demons," or demi-gods, were persons who had distinguished themselves in this life, and who were placed amongst the number of the gods after their death. These latter were just in the same position as many of the saints of the Romish calendar; persons who had distinguished themselves during their lives, and who have been pronounced by authority to be ranked amongst the supposed intercessors in heaven; persons who are considered able, by their intercession, to promote the benefit of those who apply to them, and who are propitiated by certain acts performed by their votaries for that purpose. But they, who are spiritually taught of the Holy Ghost, "know that an idol is nothing in the world." They know, that a canonized saint has no power in heaven to produce an influence upon anything in the world; and though there be many such imaginary intercessors, yet there is only "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5.) Although this passage is plainly condemnatory of the Romish saint-worship, yet its more direct application would lead us to consider whether there be any tendency in our own minds to feel something of that superstitious reverence connected with Romish rites, which might lead us to view their altars, their ceremonies, and their dogmas, in a wrong light; so as to attach to them any power as being real and true, when in fact they are unfounded and imaginary. Many protestants

are unhappily so entangled in the net of Romanism, that they are unable to divest their minds of its influence, and are therefore hindered in their christian course, and deprived thereby of that liberty of conscience which is the privilege of a christian. Another kind of superstition which is a remnant of the impressions of early education, similar to that to which the apostle alludes, often embarrasses the mind. Notions of luck and ill luck, connected with certain omens and accidents, are of the nature of the pagan "conscience of the idol." They are grounded on ancient heathen practices, the effect of which has descended through many generations; and they suppose the influence of imaginary beings, or else of real spirits whose power is controlled by the power of Christ on behalf of his people. Many christian persons might detect the remains of some such superstitions in their ordinary feelings, if they would watch carefully the impulses that arise upon the occasions referred to.

50. The grievous influence of "the infection that remains, yea in them that are regenerated" is but too apt to turn the advantage of much knowledge, and clear views of truth, into a powerful snare of selfishness and pride. How commonly we find, that those who possess the christian liberty spoken of by the apostle, make a display of their freedom, without consideration for the evil consequences which may ensue to others who must be called the weaker brethren, through the infirmities of a conscience not rightly disciplined. The particular instance which drew forth the arguments of Paul cannot occur with literal exactness, in a state of society formed by the acknowledgment of christianity, and in which the idolatry of heathenism is unknown. But in every state of society, various circumstances give occasion for the application of the principle explained by Paul. True christians are always living amongst persons of worldly character, whatever their profession may be; and occasions must always arise, in which opinions and conduct, in themselves really indifferent, will offend the consciences of some who are sincerely endeavouring to act according to the light which they possess. A little consideration will suggest to the

mind of every christian illustrations of this truth; and however unwise and unfounded may be the objections raised by some persons, to the course of conduct which others may feel that they can innocently pursue, yet if the objections are made with evident sincerity, and from pious motives, a real desire to follow the example of the apostle would induce those whose consciences might be entirely free from any difficulty, to abstain from that course to which such pious objections are made. This concession ought not to be made indeed to the extent of hindering our freedom of action in that which is distinctly for the glory of God; but in all matters in which our personal gratification is concerned, it becomes us to use such self-denial as that which enabled the apostle to say, "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

51. The benefit of shewing forth an example of self-denial is very great, in the effect necessarily produced amongst those by whom it is seen. The fact that any one is enabled to act consistently with christian principles, in subduing the impulses and desires to which all men are subject, is of itself a very great means of producing influence amongst those who, while they are conscious of the excitements to indulgence within them, are not capable of attaining to the power of control. For this gift of influence the christian is responsible; and though many may not follow his example, yet many will feel the power of it, and be led to such a preparatory state as may, by God's grace, grow into a better condition. For this reason, every christian, in his own particular circumstances, may be justified in acting as the apostle did, in order to establish his claim to whatever respect and attention is justly due to his position. But it must be with a motive similar to that of the apostle, who fully stated his claim, not with a view to exact all its requirements, but in order to manifest that, for Christ's sake, and for the benefit of his people, a christian is willing voluntarily to forego that which he might lawfully require; or charitably to forbear when he might justly condemn. The sincere application

of this motive must give its character to our claim, or else we shall not be acting after the example of the apostle, when we maintain our right to whatever privileges may belong to our position.

52. This passage can hardly be passed over without observing, that it entirely sets aside the dogma of the Romish church concerning the celibacy of the clergy. The apostle maintains his own independence of any such rule as that which is now enforced upon all the ministers of that apostate church; and he refers to other eminent persons, who had acted upon the liberty to marry, which he claimed for himself. Though the Romanists endeavour to gloss over the meaning of this passage, yet it affords an instance which tends to account for the restraint which they put upon the reading of the word of God by the people.

53. Another of the points, established by the apostle's argument, is the right of the ministers of the gospel to be supported in their labours of love, without being exposed to the necessity of occupying themselves in any other way in order to gain their bread; and this claim extends, not only to the mere necessary support of themselves, but to an adequate supply for the proper wants of the minister and his family. The fact that Paul felt it the part of christian wisdom in himself to labour with his own hands, rather than encumber the new doctrine he brought to pagan ears with the possibility of hindrance, is no reason why, under other circumstances, the support should not be required. It is enough that this claim has been scripturally established to make it a duty with every christian cheerfully to contribute towards the comfort in temporal things, of those who minister to them in heavenly things —the word of eternal salvation.

54. The duty of supplying the temporal wants of Christ's ministers in no degree justifies those, who give of their substance, to interfere with the great duty of the minister to preach the gospel, as commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ. That duty is laid upon every minister

of necessity. He *must* deliver the message of salvation through Christ alone, and declare the whole counsel of God, at the peril of his own soul—"woe to him who preaches not the gospel." Whatever may be the contributions towards the minister's support of those who hear the message, the contribution of those who deliver it is much more costly than can be measured by silver and gold. A minister, who is in any degree formed after the model of the apostle Paul, is one who, while he cannot choose but preach the gospel, is ready to make every self-sacrifice in order to shew that he does it willingly. This is his contribution to the great cause. Circumstances may render it more or less painful and difficult to him; but under the most favourable circumstances, it is a matter of no easy discipline for one who feels himself to be free from all men, to make himself servant to all. The conformity of his personal feelings and will to the characteristic differences that distinguish men is no easy attainment, which may be acquired without effort; yet if a christian minister really desires to gain souls, he must be constantly watchful over himself, in order to become as weak to the weak, and as under the law to those that were under the law, while in all things he manifests that he is not without law to Christ, but that he is striving to do all things to the glory of God.

55. "So run the race that ye may obtain" is a powerful application made by the apostle. The corruptible crown of an earthly race sinks into nothing, when it is contrasted with the incorruptible crown which is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. If we know how to estimate the unspeakable value of the one, and the nothingness of the other, we shall consider the importance of the comparison with reference to the greater inducement to temperance and self-control thus afforded to the christian; and we shall consider how far we ought to surpass the efforts of those who prepare themselves for the career of earthly glory. And yet how far short do christians fall of the diligence and energy manifested, even upon common occasions, by those who follow worldly pursuits, with the hopes of such success alone as this passing world

can supply. Surely it is well that we should constantly remember the injunction, "so run that ye may obtain."

QUESTIONS.

What is my own opinion of the amount of my knowledge of God? Do I think that I have attained to a high degree of that knowledge? How far has it contributed to my charitable feelings towards others? How far has it tended to increase my pride?

What opinion have I formed concerning Romish saint-worship? Have I any superstitious feelings with respect to departed spirits? Is Christ supreme and alone in my mind as the Mediator between God and men?

In what instance can my conduct be said to be inconsiderately offensive to any christian persons? Are there any whom I may have induced to make my conduct an excuse for acting as I do, while they cannot feel as I do as to the innocency of the matter in hand?

What is my motive in requiring from others whatever I may feel to belong of right to my station in christian society? Is it in order to enjoy the benefit? or that I may be the better able to advance the cause of Christ in the world?

What do I contribute to the support of my minister? Is it gladly and freely given? Do I expect to exercise any influence over his ministry, in consequence of my contribution towards his support?

How do I estimate the exertions of the ministers of the gospel? Do I endeavour to encourage them in their work? Do I pray for God's grace to support them in it?

With what degree of earnestness and diligence am I striving to run the christian race, so as to attain to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

THE PRAYER.

O God, who inhabitest eternity, and yet condescendest to dwell with those that are of an humble and contrite spirit, impart to me the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that in all the knowledge to which I may attain, Satan may not ensnare me through pride, but that I may be edified by the Spirit of love in Christ Jesus. May that Holy Spirit ever take of the things of Christ and so shew them to my

heart, that He may stand there supreme as the one only Mediator between thee, O God, and man; and that I may be preserved from every superstitious conscience of any idol, in connexion with the thought of those who have departed from this world. Teach me to deny myself, even in lawful things, rather than be the means of causing those to offend for whom Christ died; or the occasion of inducing any to act against his conscience. Give me christian boldness in maintaining the position, which by thy gracious or thy providential mercy may be allotted to me; and enable me to employ every gift and every advantage I may possess, so that it may conduce to the glory of Christ, and the edification of his people upon earth. Give grace, I beseech thee, to all ministers of thy gospel; that both by their preaching and living they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men. Teach me how to advance their great object, by affording every encouragement to those ministers with whom I may be brought into any intercourse. O gracious God, I beseech thee to increase in me the desire of running the race set before me, with such earnest diligence and self-denial, that I may shew forth thy praise whilst making my calling and election sure; and finally attain to the glory of thy everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. AMEN.

THIRTEENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS X.; XI. 1.

INDEX WORDS.		X.
General application of the personal illustration	1	MOREOVER, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under
all	2	the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in
	3	the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat;
	4	and did all drink the same spiritual drink: FOR they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them [or, *went with them*]: and that Rock was Christ.
with *many*	5	BUT with many of them God was not well pleased: FOR they were overthrown in the wilderness.
our figures	6	NOW these things were our examples [*our figures*],
applied to us		TO THE INTENT we should not lust after evil
ye	7	things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye
some of them		idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink,
	8	and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.
	9	Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.
	10	Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.
our figures	11	NOW all these things happened unto them for ensamples [or, *types*]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.
The lesson taught	12	WHEREFORE let him that thinketh he standeth
temptation suitable	13	take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man [or, *moderate*]:
God faithful		BUT God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.
The lesson applied	14	WHEREFORE, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.
appeal	15	I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.

The Holy Communion

16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the
17 body of Christ? For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Jewish analogy

18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

guarded

19 What say I THEN? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?

Heathen contrast

20 BUT *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

irreconcileable

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord,
and the cup of devils:
ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table,
and of the table of devils.
22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?

Liberty limited

23 All things are lawful for me,
BUT all things are not expedient:
all things are lawful for me,
BUT all things edify not.

self-denial

24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*.

exercise of liberty

25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, *that* eat,
26 asking no question for conscience sake: FOR the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.
27 If any of them that believe not bid you *to a feast*, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

limitation

28 BUT if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols,
eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth *is* the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:

unselfish submission

29 Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another *man's* conscience?
30 FOR if I by grace [or, *thanksgiving*] be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?

God's glory in all

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever
32 ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles [*Greeks*], nor to the church of God:

personal example

33 Even as I please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking mine own profit, but the
XI. *profit* of many, that they may be saved.
1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

EXPLANATION.

Paul had been enforcing the exercise of self-denial in the use of christian liberty, with reference to those points upon which his counsel had been asked by the Corinthian church. While he had urged this in the eighth chapter (see eleventh portion, page 115), he had illustrated it by a personal application to himself in the ninth (see twelfth portion, page 120); at the end of which he had stated, as a motive to his own self-denial, the fear lest any failure in his christian course should hinder his own salvation—"lest that by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should be a castaway" (ix. 27). He is led from this to suggest a similar motive to the professing christians to whom he was writing, by pointing out the important fact, that it was not the external privileges and spiritual advantages they possessed, which gave any security, that every one so privileged was really in a condition to make use of the christian liberty under consideration; because it was not from thence certain that they were indeed the saved christians which might be imagined. In doing this he made use of scriptural illustrations, which applied especially to the difficulties connected with such idolatrous practices that had occasioned the discussion; and he thus opened the way for the renewal of a direct reference to the particular case submitted for his advice.

The apostle said that, besides what he had already stated, he did not wish the Corinthian church to let slip out of their minds the fact, that *all* the Jews who came out of Egypt (whom Paul, speaking as a Jew, called their fathers—the fathers of the Jews) partook of the great privileges that pointed them out to the surrounding heathen as God's peculiar people. *The whole* of the Israelites, in one body, left Egypt under the guidance of the heavenly appearance—the Shechinah—the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. (Exod. xiii. 20—22.) *All* of them passed through the Red Sea by a dry path, while the waters were made by Jehovah "a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." (Exod. xiv. 21, 22.) *All* the Jews were thus consecrated and outwardly distinguished and enlisted, so to speak, into the Mosaic church, and brought into the dispensation of the law under Moses,

being all led forth by that cloud through that sea. This seems to be the meaning of the expression "baptized unto Moses" which the apostle made use of. Probably as speaking to a body of persons, who were accustomed to connect the thought of personal consecration and admission into the church with the appointed rite of baptism, he employed that word to suggest the same thoughts with reference to the Mosaic church, without intending that water-baptism was literally used at the time spoken of. The account of the miraculous passage given in the book of Exodus makes no mention of anything like a literal baptism of water. The cloud which guided the Israelites was the token of the Divine Presence, and not an ordinary cloud from which rain results; and the waters of the Red Sea never touched them as they walked between the walls of water on dry land. The references made in the sixty-eighth and seventy-seventh Psalms (Psa. lxviii. 7—10; lxxvii. 11—20) will hardly justify the supposition that the sprinkling by the rain there alluded to is the baptism to which the apostle refers in this passage; and therefore we must come to the conclusion that his meaning was that which has been already stated.

The apostle, having referred to the general application of the privileges which marked the separation of the Israelites from the Egyptians when they first went forth, added also those by which they were afterwards supported during their sojourn in the wilderness. Every one of the Jews partook of the manna—"angels' food" as it is called in the seventy-eighth Psalm (verse 25)—"spiritual meat" as the apostle calls it; meaning either the same thing as though he had said food from heaven, or food which was a typical representation of the bread that supports and renews the spirit instead of the body, as our Lord Jesus Christ explained it in applying it to himself. (John vi. 31—58.) *All* the Israelites lived upon this same spiritual food. (Exod. xvi. 15, 35.) Such was also the case with respect to the stream of water which flowed from the rock Horeb, when it was smitten by Moses at the command of God. (Exod. xvii. 6.) It appears that the water which came forth from that rock formed a river, which took its course through the desert in which they

were journeying forty years; and that it afforded a daily supply and refreshment to the great multitude which formed the camp of the Israelites, *all* of whom were refreshed by drinking of it. This too is called "spiritual drink," either as being divinely imparted by a continued miracle through the operation of the Holy Spirit; or, as in the former case, as being a distinct type of that living water which refreshes the soul, and which our Lord Jesus Christ distinctly applied to himself as the giver of it. (John iv. 10—14; vii. 37—39.) *All* the Jews in the wilderness drank of this stream which flowed from the rock—this "spiritual drink." And as the waters were typical of the Holy Spirit of Christ, so the rock from whence they miraculously flowed, after it had been smitten, stood as the type of that same Christ himself.

Having shewed how *all* the Jews were thus privileged during the whole course of their wilderness wanderings, Paul proceeds to point out that it was not the enjoyment of these privileges which proved that they possessed the true and effectual favour of God. With *the most* of these Israelites God was not well pleased. The Greek does not only say "with many," but with *the* many, by a phrase which signifies by far the greater part of them; and the historical fact shews that there were only two, out of the whole number of those who left Egypt (Joshua and Caleb), who were allowed to reach the promised land. (Num. xiv. 29—32.) The evidence of God's displeasure was seen in the fearful consequences of their sins. Their carcases were strewn dead in the desert through which they were passing; a description given in strong language in the original account; and the word employed in the Greek in this passage presents the same terrible image to the mind, though our translators have only rendered it "they were overthrown in the wilderness." The events of this miraculous passage of the Jews in the desert, which the apostle had thus brought before them, were types or allegorical representations, in which those who are living under the christian dispensation (as the Corinthians were), might see the manner of God's dealings with persons who were outwardly his people, while they lived in sinful disobedience to his laws. Their fearful end was a warning to us, in

order that we should not allow within us those strong desires after forbidden things to which they gave way. (Num. xi. 4. 31—34.) Again, the example of the history of the Jews should warn us against partaking of the sin of idolatry, as some of the Jews did upon the occasion of the golden calf made by Aaron, when Moses was in the mount with God. Paul quotes the passage which gives the account of this, (Exod. xxxii. 6), and which states, that when the people (who were then the people of Jehovah) made their offerings to the idol, they joined at the same time in the feasts, followed by the revelry that have always distinguished idol-worship. The sins of impurity have always been closely connected with that of idolatry; and after pointing out for our warning the revelry accompanying idol-feasts, as seen in the case of the ancient people of God, he at once calls attention to their indulgence in the sins of the flesh, as another feature in their sad case by which they supply us with an example. He refers especially to the licentious intercourse of some of the Jews with the daughters of Moab (Num. xxv. 1—9); and applies the warning, that christians should not commit the like. Let them observe the consequences of that licentiousness—God's wrath was kindled, and having gone forth against the people, twenty-three thousand of them died on the same day. The account in the book of Numbers states that "twenty and four thousand died in the plague." This difference in number has been accounted for in two ways: either the precise number was something between twenty-three and twenty-four thousand, and might be stated in general terms either as being twenty three or twenty-four; or the number who were killed directly by the anger of the Lord was 23,000, and one thousand more were afterwards sacrificed by the judgment of Moses, when he "said unto the judges of Israel, slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor."

Another warning, resulting from this application of the Jewish types, leads christians to be careful not to tempt Christ as had been the case with some of the Israelites. The word *to tempt* is used in different senses: when employed in a bad sense, and with reference to man, it means to place before any one inducements to sin: but when

used with reference to the Divine Person, it means to make trial of his ability to do what he has said, or to try his patience to see how long he will forbear. The Jews did this upon various occasions, but one particular instance is referred to by the apostle, when "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way, and the people spake against God and against Moses." It was upon this occasion that "the Lord sent fiery serpents amongst the people," and afterwards commanded Moses to make the "serpent of brass," "that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live," which our Lord afterwards applied to himself in his conversation with Nicodemus. (Num. xxi. 4—9. John iii. 14, 15.) The apostle seems to sum up all the rebellious inconsistencies of a people who professed to belong to Jehovah, by the last instance he adduces as a warning to christians; for he points out the murmuring which brought the sentence of death upon a whole generation of the Jews, with the exception of two individuals. The account of that repining and complaining is given in the fourteenth chapter of the book of Numbers; in consequence of this, the Lord declared that "their carcases should fall in the wilderness." This accordingly happened, and as the apostle says, "they were overthrown in the wilderness." The angel of death (who is called "the destroyer" in Exod. xii. 23,) was commissioned to go forth against them while they were still in the desert, and all the murmurers were there destroyed.

All these several instances of judgment upon sin, in spite of great external privileges, occurred to the Israelites in such a manner as to make them types and figures, which have been written in the word of God for the warning and admonition of those who live under the dispensation of the gospel: this had already come in the time of Paul and the Corinthian christians, and will continue until the Lord Jesus Christ shall return from heaven, when he shall have "accomplished the number of his elect" in order to "hasten his kingdom" of glory. This dispensation will constitute the last of the ages into which the world's history may be divided, from the fall of man, to the restitution of all things (Acts iii. 21): and is there-

fore sometimes called the "the last days" (Acts ii. 17. Heb. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 20), and sometimes "the fulness of the time" (Gal. iv. 4), and here it is called "the ends of the ages," which is the literal rendering of what our translators have given as "the ends of the world." Here the apostle gives the important application of the whole argument. A christian who supposes himself to be secure and standing firmly, so that he is not likely to do any thing contrary to the profession of the gospel on which he depends, should learn from these typical warnings, to be watchful against the danger of falling into those sinful inconsistences from which he conceives himself to be safe. In order however to counteract the alarm which such a warning might be calculated to excite, in the minds of humble christians who are sensible of their own infirmities, Paul proceeds to strengthen all such by the assurance of that divine support, which will both guard a true christian from overpowering assaults by the evil enemy, and will afford him support in such as may be permitted to come upon him. Christians are never exposed to other temptations than those which it accords with the capacity of human nature to endure. There seems to be some difficulty in conveying precisely the meaning of the word rendered "common to man," and our translators have given us the choice of the word "moderate" in preference, by placing it in the margin. The sense conveyed by the manner in which the same word is translated in Romans vi. 19, may assist the English reader in coming to a view of the meaning here. It is there rendered *after the manner of men*—"I speak *after the manner of men* because of the infirmity of your flesh;" and it implies an adaptation of human phraseology to human infirmity. So in the passage before us the apostle may be considered as saying, no temptation has been allowed to come upon you but such as has been adapted in its intensity to the weakness of human infirmity. And there is even something in the force of the Greek word, which may admit the thought that no temptation is permitted to beset a christian, but such as may in some way be suitable to the individual human character of the person tempted. Whether this latter view of the meaning be correct or not, it is plain that the expression

is intended to convey the notion of the "moderate" and limited nature of every temptation by which christian men are tried. And this statement is strengthened by the assurance of God's faithfulness to his gracious promises of support and strength to all who seek him as their refuge and dependance. This promise is implied in every part of his word, and by the terms of his merciful covenant with man: he is true to his word, and he will not permit any to be exposed to a power of temptation beyond that which they might resist and overcome, if they availed themselves of the means placed within their power. In order to ensure this, the faithful God will accompany every temptation that he permits with some counteracting influence—some means which may open a door through which the tempted christian may escape from what would otherwise seem a necessity for falling into sin; and thus may be enabled to stand against the power that is tempting him.

The apostle now draws the conclusion which connects all his reasoning with the subject which was originally under discussion. For all these reasons he calls on those he so dearly loved as the Corinthian christians, to avoid by every means all connexion with the great crime of idolatry. In order to render the whole subject more clear to the reader, it may be well to trace back the course of his argument, that we may be the better prepared to follow him in his renewal of the application of it in the latter part of this portion. The question proposed by the Corinthians for his consideration related to the manner of making use of the flesh of the animals which were sacrificed in the temples of idols. (chap. viii., page 115.) He had assumed that all christians had a general knowledge that a heathen deity was an imaginary being, that had in fact no existence. (page 116). He had conceded that the mere act of eating and drinking had of itself no influence on our standing before God; and the liberty of a christian to act upon this knowledge and this concession. But he had stated the case of the weaker christians, who, not having the same liberty of conscience, might be ensnared into sin (page 117); and he had urged this as a motive to abstain from meats offered to idols; and as one

which prevailed in the regulation of his own conduct; (page 118.) To establish the high authority of his own example he went at some length into the grounds of his claim as an apostle; and at the same time the manner in which he had not enforced that claim, and the motives that led him to relinquish it. (chap. ix. page 121.) Then he brings before them again his own example of self-denial, and introduces another motive prompting the same course, —the necessity of controuling and bringing into subjection his own desires, lest he should be found to be as the dross instead of the pure ore in the great day of the Lord. (page 125.) He thus introduces the difference between the true spiritual people of God and the mere outward professors; and brings forward the facts connected with the typical dispensation of Moses in illustration of his argument. After stating the general *inclusive* character of the christian sacraments and privileges through their Jewish types, he points out the *exclusion*, by reason of sin, of vast numbers from the final advantages to be anticipated. In doing this he selects those instances of Jewish history which have a direct bearing on the special case of the sin of idolatry, which was the matter in hand. He first refers to the lusting after unnecessary indulgences, which was the root of all the rest,—desiring meat when they had bread;—then to the first great act of open idolatry, accompanied by the revelry with which it was connected; —then to the unchaste and impure acts which invariably result from idolatrous practices;—then to the outraging of the divine patience and forbearance which marks those who indulge idolatrous habits;—and lastly, to the rebellious murmuring against God's dealings which characterizes those whose worship is given to any but the true God. From these illustrations he draws the application, that those who think they are safe, because of their privileges, must take heed lest they follow the example of their predecessors in such privileges; and, taking care to comfort the sincere and humble christian by directing attention to the real security of dependance on God's faithfulness, he makes that very faithfulness an additional reason for urging them to avoid the danger involved in approaching the snares of idolatry, in the practices of which most of

the Corinthian converts had been brought up. Thus all his various arguments combine to induce them to follow his example in denying himself the exercise of that christian liberty which he above others undoubtedly possessed; concluding by, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." He spoke (he said) to those who were qualified to form a just opinion of his arguments; let them consider, and judge whether he had not spoken wisely.

In more immediate application to this subject, Paul reminds the Corinthian church, that the sacramental ordinance of the Lord's Supper separated them from all other persons by joining them, as it were, to the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. After the solemn consecration of the cup in that holy rite, is not the devout partaking of it an acknowledged act of communion or fellowship in the blood of Christ—"his blood of the new covenant?" and in like manner is not the partaking of the bread, solemnly broken in commemoration of the death upon the cross, a similar act of fellowship in the body of the Lord Jesus? As the separate portions of flour are combined in one loaf, so all christians combine to form one body—one society; and by partaking of the sacramental bread, we manifest ourselves as parts of the one loaf. So also it was amongst the Jews:—the priests who sacrificed, and the individuals who offered the sacrifices, each partaking according to their share in eating the flesh of the animal sacrificed, were worshippers of the same God, and were considered as united in worship at the altar. The argument then here is, that those who partake of the Lord's Supper, proclaim their fellowship and union with Christ, and that Jewish partakers of the sacrifices of the temple proclaimed their fellowship and union with the worshippers of Jehovah; and in like manner also, those who partake of the idol feasts must be considered as manifesting a fellowship and union with the worshippers of the idol, in whose honour the feast was held.

In opening this subject, he had taken for granted their general knowledge that an idol represented a mere imaginary being, who in reality had no existence; and now he anticipates an objection that might be made to his argument, that it might seem to suppose that an idol was the image

of some real being. Did he then by this affirm that an idol represents anything? or that the flesh of idol sacrifices became different in any respect from other meat? By no means:—the manner of putting the question implies the strong denial. But this he did affirm;—that when the heathen idolaters made an offering in sacrifice, they meant to perform the act in worship of demons or demi-gods (see page 117), and not of the true God: and Paul did not desire that the Corinthian christians should be joined in fellowship or communion with idolaters in worshipping demons. In fact they must be consistent, they could not do both;—they could not be in communion both with Christ and demons. They could not in spiritual reality partake of the Lord's Supper, and join in honouring an idol at its feast. They could not be received at the table of the Lord, and join at the table spread in honour of demons. Can christians possibly venture to provoke the wrath of Him who is a jealous God, by seeming to give to another the honour due to Him alone? Do they suppose they could resist the power of his wrath, as if they were stronger than He, by daring thus to brave it?

In treating of a former subject (that of going to law), Paul had already drawn the distinction between the liberty of a christian to follow any certain course, and his duty not to pursue a course which might be detrimental to his fellow-christians (ch. vi. 12; see page 87). He repeated now the words he had made use of upon that occasion, declaring that there are various things which a man might do without positively committing an offence against God's law; while however many of them were not such as would be fitting and expedient, or would promote the great object to which his life should be devoted: even if lawful for himself to do, they might not tend to build up and confirm in the truth others, who were concerned in them as well as himself. In such cases, a christian was not to follow the course that would be good for himself; but should rather strive to do that which would be beneficial to others. Then the apostle proceeds to apply this principle directly to the case of difficulty which he had been discussing; and states the course which ought to be pursued with reference to the flesh of animals

that had been sacrificed to idols. He says that any christian might freely purchase meat exposed for sale in the market, without making any enquiries, through tenderness of conscience, as to where or how it had been slaughtered. Acting upon that truth declared in the scriptures, that the "earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (Psa. xxiv. 1), every thing upon the face of the earth belongs to Him who made it; and may be freely used by his servants, "being received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." (1 Tim. iv. 3.) And further than this, if any heathen person should invite a christian to a friendly meal, the christian being disposed to accept the invitation, might go to his neighbour's house, and when there he may partake of the food he finds upon the table, without making any enquiries concerning it through conscientious difficulties. But if some one present should draw his attention to the fact, that the meat placed before him had been part of an animal offered in sacrifice to idols, then the christian must forbear to partake of that meat, on account of the danger of doing harm to the person who pointed it out, and for the sake of a scrupulous conscience. In such a case, the same scriptural truth which would justify us in using the meat exposed for sale in the market, might be alledged as an additional reason why we should forbear to eat that particular food, so marked as desecrated by idolatry; for the whole of the fruits of the earth belong to the Lord, and his servants may therefore find ample supplies, without touching what there is a doubt even whether they may partake of without sin. The apostle explains that, in referring to the care to be taken out of respect to a scrupulous conscience, he did not intend to speak of the conscience of the individual himself, but rather of the scruples of that man's conscience who should draw attention to the objection against the food. Such a one would be sure to misconstrue and condemn the eating of the sacrificed flesh; and why should a christian allow his more advanced state of liberty to be submitted to this erroneous judgment by the tender conscience of another? If, through the grace of God, he feels conscientiously able to distinguish between the sinful spirit of idolatrous worship, and the outward means by

which it was expressed, and so to partake without scruple of the meat which had been in an idol's temple; still why should he expose himself to censure for the manner in which he takes his food? This the apostle expresses by a phrase, which has reference to the habit of returning thanks at every meal, which was used by all christians.

The whole subject is closed by pointing out how people ought to put in practice the great principles of love to God and love to man. Whatever we do, even in such a matter as eating and drinking (unimportant as it might seem to some), even here as in every thing else, our whole conduct should tend in the first place to the glory of God, and in the second place we should strive to give no just occasion for any to be ensnared into sin by our actions. This principle should govern our conduct with reference both to the Jews, and to the unconverted pagans, as well as to those who are the members of the christian church. He adds an appeal to his own example, which he had already so forcibly justified and explained. He repeats that he acted upon these principles, conducting himself so as to suit himself (in every respect consistent with the character of a christian) to the peculiar feelings and circumstances of all with whom he had to do. (1 Cor. ix. 22, see page 124.) This he did, acting upon the rule he had first given them (chap. x. 24), of not pursuing his own advantage, but rather seeking the benefit of others, in order to be the means of forwarding their salvation. He charged the Corinthians therefore to follow the course which his conduct pointed out to them; even as he himself was following that course which was marked out for him by the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION.

56. The apostle's illustration of this subject, very forcibly points out the absolute necessity of personal religion, in order to justify the hope that we are really members of God's family. The admission into that family by outward ordinances, has been the fertile source of self-deceit amongst mankind. Men are well pleased to satisfy themselves that they may hope for the enjoyment of heaven upon any grounds, which will not make it abso-

lutely necessary that they should forego the enjoyment of sin upon earth: and therefore it has been amongst the most subtle and most successful devices of the enemy, to lead men to rest in a system of ritual religion which takes the essential point for granted, in connection with the external privilege. The Lord has been pleased to appoint certain outward observances as seals of his covenant, which covenant however can only be applied by the inward Spirit. What vast numbers of persons have remained in the delusion that water-baptism has been an effectual admission into the favour of God; though they have lived and died without that baptism of the Holy Ghost, which alone can make any one partaker of the real benefits of Christ. The danger of this fallacy is plainly shewn, by Paul's reference to the case of the Israelites in the wilderness. They all partook of outward privileges—they all received outward protection—they were all admitted to the outward signs of the covenant. If they were to be judged of by externals, they would all have been considered as religious people; but by far the greatest number of these Israelites rested entirely in ritual religion, which had no controlling influence over the sinfulness of their hearts. God is a Spirit, and requires that they who worship Him should worship him in spirit and in truth. This spiritual God was not well pleased with them; and His anger brought them to a miserable end, in spite of their guidance by His presence—their baptism to Moses—their feeding on the manna, and drinking the water from the rock. These things were but the shadows of that substance of religion which we possess in the gospel. The visible church of Christ possesses higher privileges than the church in the wilderness. The presence of God is with it, in spite of the many, because of the few. The sacred ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are real tokens of true promises. But the outward signs are in themselves but the shells, of which multitudes may partake, who never receive the essential grace. All professing christians partake of the external privileges; but with many of them God is not well pleased. This is the application, to which the apostle points the attention of all professing christians.

57. But the apostle relates the manifestation of the anger of God. The unfaithful children of Israel died in the wilderness. Their following of Moses did not ward off the judgment of God, which fell upon them for their sins. This part of the shadow has also its counterpart in the substance of our christianity. Ritual religion will not bring us within the shadow of that Rock, where we can find shelter from the wrath of God; and the bodily deaths faintly picture the more terrible destruction of the second death, by which the soul is cast out eternally from the presence of God. The judgments of God, however terrible upon an unbelieving and rebellious world, will be much more fearful upon those who know his name, and say "Lord, Lord," but do not the will of Him they profess to call Master. To boast that they have eaten and drank in the Lord's presence, will not be received as a claim for mercy. The spiritual nourishment received by faith is that which alone makes us partakers of Christ, so as to profit by His atonement and righteousness, so as to be relieved from condemnation because he was condemned. The only effect of knowing Christ's will, as every member of the visible church must, is only to draw upon the nominal professors the "many stripes" beyond the comparatively "few" which will be the portion of the ignorant heathen. (Luke xii. 47, 48.)

58. The mention of *spiritual* meat, and *spiritual* drink, from the *spiritual* Rock, taken in connection with the subsequent reference to the Lord's Supper, may illustrate the importance of estimating all *outward* means of grace according to the spiritual benefit actually derived, rather than according to the form and substance of the material used in the ordinance. The Israelites all partook of the manna, and of the stream from the smitten rock which flowed after them in their journeyings;—but how few were really benefited in a spiritual sense. Yet the manna was "spiritual meat," and the "Rock was Christ," to those who saw by faith the antitype in the type. (John vi. 31—58.) It pleased the Lord Jesus to appoint for his spiritual church other elements to which he attached the same subjects for faith as had been affixed to the

manna and the stream in the wilderness; and as he speaks of the rock as supplying spiritual drink of old, he says "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" and as of the manna being spiritual meat of old, he says "the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The Romanists (at least since the ninth century) offend against scripture and against common sense, by maintaining distinctly, that the consecrated bread and wine are transubstantiated, or changed in substance, and become each and all the very "body, blood, soul, and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, whole and entire;" and they practically carry out this monstrous error to the extreme of idolatry. And although our church most plainly protests against such doctrine, yet there are many that profess to be members of our church, who foster within themselves a superstitious feeling towards the outward elements, very different from the reverential feeling with which a spiritual christian regards them as employed to engage the mind and heart in exercises on heavenly things. To persons of this class the apostle's mode of treating the subject in this portion may be importantly useful. It may not be unnecessary also to point out, that in this passage "the cup" is not said to be *the blood of Christ*, nor is "the bread which we break" said to be *the body of Christ*; but both the cup and the bread, are stated to be "*the communion* of the blood and of the body of Christ:" that is, that the act of partaking of the wine and of the bread, is a means by which the spiritual soul is brought into communion with the Spirit of Christ. "God is a Spirit," and no outward bodily act can of itself make any one partaker of Christ, without the actings of spiritual life within him, laying hold of the Spirit of God. Where these actings exist, the person is a new creature, shewing the evidence of it in a new course resulting from spiritual motives. Where they do not exist, no sacramental ordinance can convey any spiritual benefit whatever. Hence in the administration of the Sacrament of baptism to infants, the gift of the Holy Spirit for the child is earnestly sought by prayer in the first place, before the "outward and visible sign" is used; and in the administration of it

to adults, a confession of faith is required of the recipients: while in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, none are allowed to partake, until they make their profession openly as spiritual members of Christ's holy church.

59. The combination of a full trust in the supporting power of Christ's Spirit, with a sincere and deep sense of our own weakness and incapacity, is an essential grace in the christian life. It is most important for maintaining the arduous struggle against those enemies with which we have to contend, the devil, the world, and the flesh. A notion that we are standing safely, and that we are proof against the power of temptation, is the sure way to attract temptation at a time when we are off our guard; and if upon such occasions God should see fit to leave us to the imaginary security we felt, without doubt the temptation would overcome us. How many christians can look back upon circumstances in their lives, (perhaps known only to themselves), in which they have been left to find out, that their preservation from falling into awful sin has been wholly owing to the goodness of God's providence; and that all the guilt of a fall was their's, though He had spared them from the act of it. It is thus that christians are practically instructed in the lesson contained in Paul's exhortation, "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." What wonder if it should happen, that those who refuse to learn this lesson are permitted to discover its importance, by being left to themselves so as to fall evidently.

60. Every temptation has a peculiar character, in some way or other adapted to the circumstances of the person tempted. If we acknowledge the certain fact of the intervention of the tempter—Satan, by means of his multitudes of evil spirits, in presenting temptation to the mind—in laying the snare for the victim, it will follow of course that one so cunning, and with such means of knowing the secret recesses of each heart, would not apply an unsuitable bait in his attempts to catch the soul. Upon this ground, we might expect, that no temptation would

take us but such as is suitable to *the* man in each case; whether that rendering of the Greek word be justified or not. It is an humbling thought, when we are attacked by hateful suggestions to evil, that if there were not some elements in our own natural character with which such suggestions accorded—some latent impulses of desire to which the objects proposed were fitted—those particular temptations would not have been cast in our way. But while the thought is humbling, if wisely used it may help us in detecting the special points upon which we should be most careful—the dangers against which we should be most upon our guard. And the comforting assurance, which the apostle connects with this warning, affords us the strong ground of the Lord's promise behind which to entrench ourselves, when the temptations of the enemy have disclosed to us the side on which we are least capable of defence. Even when our weakest points are assailed, we have the assurance that God's protecting grace and providence is on our side; and that "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." His faithfulness is pledged to this; and if the tempter get the victory, he can only succeed through the treachery of our own hearts, which, instead of taking advantage of God's assured defence, side with the enemy, and consent to his devices.

61. Though the danger of literal outward idolatry may not be great to a professing christian in the present day, yet the essential character of the offence still manifests itself in that spiritual idolatry, which gives to anything that highest place in the heart and affections, which belongs to God alone. By means of this essential idolatry, the great enemy secures the services of many souls in nominally christian countries, even as he did formerly by the grosser allurements of image-worship. The world is still under the influence of him who has been made by men "the prince of this world," and "the god of this world:" and the feasts which are spread by the worshippers of mammon, are oftentimes as dangerous to christians now, as were the idol-feasts at Corinth. A christian was

enjoined then not to participate with pagans in that which had an acknowledged connection with idolatry, for the sake of the consciences of those who would have been stumbled by such an inconsistency on the part of one who proclaimed the supremacy of the true God, and the divinity of the Saviour Christ: and this same principle applies with equal force to the combination of christian professors with persons so plainly of a worldly character, as to be undeniably without the influence of spiritual truth. The ordinary course of society may be followed by any christian, so long as he maintains an open testimony to the truth he professes; but when he must sacrifice the consistency of that truth, in order to join in any worldly society, there he must stand upon the principles of Christ's gospel, and refuse to partake of anything that compromises his allegiance to Christ.

62. The main practical object of the whole passage is, to urge upon christians the duty of self-denial, even in lawful things; rather than run the risk of casting a stumbling-block in the way of those whose consciences have not attained to that clearness of faith, which might enable them to exercise their christian liberty without scruple. This point has been noticed already in Applications 50 and 51, arising out of the preceding portion; and these should be read in connection with the present passage also. The master principle that would direct the course of each christian in every case of difficulty, is set forth by the apostle in concluding his advice upon the subject;—"Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." A hearty desire to make God's glory the first object in every part of our conduct, would lead us to estimate everything according as it conduces towards this end; and then the danger of ensnaring a single soul into sin would far overbalance the pleasure to be obtained by any personal gratification.

QUESTIONS.

Do I build my personal christianity upon ritual observances? How far are they the token of spiritual life within me? How far is my life consistent with my baptismal vow,

and my sacramental remembrance of the death of Christ? Am I sensible of the increased responsibility which results from my christian profession? What effect is produced in me by the thought of God's judgments upon formal professors?

With what feelings do I regard the elements of bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? are my feelings superstitious and leading to idolatry? or only reverential, and conducive to keep up a sense of Christ's spiritual presence in the midst of his people?

To what power am I indebted for the preservation of my character before men? Is it to my own integrity and uprightness? Have I never done anything which, if it were fully and publicly known, would alter that character?

What effect have my temptations upon me? Do they humble me? Do I consider them as pointing out the sins into which I am most likely to fall?

How far am I connected with worldly society? what does my conduct testify of christianity, when I mix with such persons?

How do I prove that the glory of God is the main object with me in all that I do? what acts of personal self-denial tend to shew that it is so?

THE PRAYER.

O God, all-seeing and almighty, who searchest the hearts, and understandest the thoughts of men, so rule the affections of my heart, that the truth which I profess to believe may not be to me only a form of godliness, the power of which I deny in my actions. Grant me the living Holy Spirit of Christ; that I may be strengthened and refreshed by the use of thy appointed means of grace, and find continually that thou employest them for the renewal of that life within me. Give me a holy fear of the awful judgments that are due to those who know thy will, and do it not; and make me to feel more and more my own responsibility in knowing so much of thy will, that I may not be satisfied with doing it but imperfectly. Preserve me from all superstitious feeling in reference to the sacramental ordinances; and bestow upon me that reverential sense of heavenly things, which may prevent

me from allowing the feeling of worship to be embodied with earthly things. Save me from the least approach to the crime of idolatry, whether by outward act, or by inward devotion to any other than to thee, O God. Teach me to dread my own heart—to know my own weakness—and to shun everything that may tend to ensnare me into the commission of those sins which most easily beset me. Enable me to profit by the temptations which Satan places before me; make them the means of discovering the points on which I am most in danger. However humbling be the lesson, make me to learn it effectually, so that I may not be left to find out the danger by falling into sin. Remember, Lord, thy faithfulness; strengthen thou me according to thy word. With every temptation of Satan, or of the world, or of my own heart, make thou a way to escape, that I may be able to bear it; and having withstood in the day of trial by thy grace, may stand in the day of victory to thy glory. Fill me with thine own fulness, O gracious Lord, that whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do, I may by thy Spirit, do all to thy glory, in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour. AMEN.

FOURTEENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS XI. 2—16.

INDEX WORDS.
Approved remembrance
and practice
but man
woman
Christ

2 NOW I praise you, brethren, THAT ye remember me in all things,
AND keep the ordinances [or, *traditions*], as I delivered *them* to you.
3 BUT I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ;
AND the head of the woman *is* the man;
AND the head of Christ *is* God.

symbolized—the head	4	Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head.
contrasted	5	BUT every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: FOR that is even all one as if she were shaven.
	6	For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: BUT if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.
why not covered	7	FOR a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, FORASMUCH as he is the image and glory of God:
why covered		BUT the woman is the glory of the man.
	8	For the man is not of the woman;
		BUT the woman of the man.
	9	NEITHER was the man created for the woman;
		BUT the woman for the man.
	10	FOR THIS CAUSE ought the woman to have power [that is, *a covering, in sign that she is under the power of her husband,*] on *her* head because of the angels.
Yet both one	11	NEVERTHELESS neither is the man without the woman,
in the Lord		neither the woman without the man, in the
	12	Lord. FOR as the woman *is* of the man, even
		so *is* the man also by the woman;
of God		BUT all things of God.
Appeal to reason	13	Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered?
	14	Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?
	15	But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; FOR *her* hair is given her for a covering, [or, *veil.*]
No contention.	16	BUT if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

EXPLANATION.

The apostle is still evidently referring to the contents of the letter written by the Corinthians, to seek counsel of him upon various points connected with due order in the church. (1 Cor. vii. 1; see page 92.) He had taken several of these points one after another, and given them the advice they asked; and being about to refer to some matters of outward form (of which probably mention had been made in the letter from Corinth), he begins by stating his approbation of the respect which had been paid to his original instructions, when he had first planted the church

at Corinth. He praised the christian brethren for having regarded, *upon the whole*, what he had said to them; and for having conformed in general to the regulations for church order, which he had laid down when he was with them. The words "in all things" must be taken with this limitation; for he proceeds at once to point out some particulars, in which they had departed from the spirit and practice of those instructions. The word that is rendered "ordinances" (and in the margin "traditions"), has no reference whatever to matters handed down from any one *to* Paul, or to any *doctrine*, but distinctly refers to matters of outward observance delivered by Paul to the Corinthians;—it has nothing of the sense of *tradition*, as that word is commonly used in the present day by the Romanists.

He then calls particular attention to the subject of the demeanour and dress of both men and women in the public assemblies of the church. He first points out the relative position of men and women, with reference to their religious as well as social condition. The Lord Jesus Christ is "the head of the church," (as the apostle says elsewhere, Eph. v. 23). He is the Head, the supreme Ruler, the Master of every man in the church. Women besides this, have another head, ruler, and master; not one whom they are bound to obey *before* Christ the Head of the church, but one to whom they must "submit themselves as it is fit *in the Lord*." (Col. iii. 18.) The man is the head of the woman. This gradation of order is carried on beyond men and women on earth. He who is the Head of each member of the church has condescended to take flesh, and, though "equal with the Father as touching his Godhead," to become "inferior to the Father as touching his manhood;" and thus the Lord Jesus has God the Father for his Head.

Such being the relative position of christian men and women to God in Christ, the actual bodily head of each is considered as a symbolical token of it; and the mode of dealing with the attire of the head in public worship becomes a means of manifesting, whether each individual is sensible of their respective position. When *a man* is engaged in public worship, whether leading in prayer, or

ministering in the word, if he were to remain with his head covered, he would manifest a great disrespect to the great Head of the church, and of each of its members. This must be the meaning, if the Head which he dishonours be taken in the figurative and symbolical sense, as it probably should be; or if it be taken in the literal sense, then (the covering of the head, being a token of servitude) to remain covered would express an acknowledgment of inferiority to the woman, which would be unseemly and inconsistent. But on the other hand, the relative position of the woman is one of subordination to the man; and therefore for a woman to be engaged in the exercises of public worship without her veil—the usual covering for the female head, would manifest great disrespect for the man; as well as a great want of modesty, and disregard to the received customs of propriety. To have the hair of a woman cut off, was in those days either a mark of extreme grief and mourning, if done with her consent; or a mark of great disgrace, as a punishment for unchaste and immoral conduct:—very much in the way that women's hair is cut short, when they enter Penitentiaries in the present day. For a woman so far to defy received custom, as to engage publicly in religious exercises without a veil, would have been as bad as if her hair were cropped for want of chastity. If a woman could persuade herself to appear thus publicly unveiled, she might as well cut her hair short at once. If this would evidently be immodest and shameful, so she ought to feel the uncovering of her head to be; and therefore she ought to appear in a veil.

It would seem by this passage that in the public worship of the church at Corinth, females were permitted to take some part in the ministrations. It is not indeed impossible that the words here used might merely imply that the women partook of the ministrations in common with others; joining in common prayer whilst he who ministered spake aloud; and prophesying by reading portions of the scriptures in turn with the male part of the congregation. As however the usual interpretation (that the women spoken of led in prayer, and were the agents of ministering God's word in the congregation) seems to be the more obvious meaning of the passage, it is adopted

here. But it is important to observe, that the apostle speaks of the case, not as one which he approves, but merely as one that actually existed in Corinth: and he distinctly stated afterwards, that the "women were to keep silence in the churches, because it was not permitted unto them to speak." (1 Cor. xiv. 34.) Therefore it must be concluded, from his referring without disapprobation to the fact of women praying and prophesying in public ordinances, that they did so as persons evidently exercising special gifts of the Holy Ghost; such as those spoken of by the prophet Joel, and referred to in the sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 17, 18. Joel ii. 28, 29)—and as the daughters of Philip the deacon (Acts xxi. 8, 9)—or as Anna the prophetess. (Luke ii. 36.)

The apostle proceeds to enlarge upon the point in question; and says that a man indeed is not under the necessity of covering his head, inasmuch as he was formed in the image of God, and was to manifest in that image something of the wonderful glory and power of God who created him thus: whereas, on the other hand, a woman is a likeness of and appendage to man; for the male was not formed from the female, but the woman was formed out of the substance of the man. (Gen. ii. 18, 22, 23.) And in this original formation, the man was not created for the comfort and benefit of the woman, but the woman was created to be "a help meet" for the man. Since then in the beginning the angels of God were present at this original formation, and have since witnessed the worship of the sons and daughters of that original pair, the woman should always bear upon her head the token of subjection to the power of the man, because it was thus originally arranged. (This seems to be the meaning which may be attached to the words of that very difficult passage in the tenth verse.)

Upon referring however to this original subjection of the woman to the man, the apostle interposes the thought of their oneness as members of the church of Christ, apparently to check any assumption of superiority that, according to human nature, might rise in the mind of a man. In the Lord, neither the man is apart from the woman, nor the woman apart from the man; but being

one flesh by nature, they become of one spirit in Christ. Even as regards the original creation, as the woman was taken out of the side of the man, so in the subsequent generations men are born of women. The dependence is mutual; and the whole arrangement of all, both in the beginning and in the course of generations, is according to the appointment of God.

Before closing this part of the subject, the apostle appeals to the natural sense of decency and propriety, which the christians at Corinth must entertain. Is it becoming and proper (says he) that a woman should engage in prayer to God, without having a modest covering upon her head? And again, is there not a natural feeling against the thought of long hair in a man, which degrades him with the appearance of effeminacy? whereas there is a feeling in favour of a woman's wearing long hair, as suitable and becoming. Her hair is a sort of natural veil, which is given to her as if to point out the propriety of covering her head.

Paul had thus appealed to the natural judgment of the Corinthians. If however any person should deal with this subject as a matter of argument, and should contend that no reason could be given for or against the custom of wearing or not wearing the hair, covering or not covering the head; then the question must be settled by the statement, that the apostle had not established any regulation for women to attend the public services uncovered; and that no such custom existed in any of the churches of Christ.

APPLICATION.

63. We ought to be as precise as possible in attaching notions to the words of scripture: and if this be the case at all times, it becomes more evidently so, when the Romanists insidiously use every means, to interpret God's word in such a manner as may afford some plausible ground for their unscriptural dogmas. With a view to substitute the systems of men for the simple truth of God, the church of Rome requires a deference to what they call tradition, almost equal to that claimed for scripture: it is therefore very important to pay attention to the

remark made in the explanation, that the "tradition," or "ordinances," spoken of by Paul in this portion, has not the slightest similarity with the tradition of the Romanists. The word refers to those external matters which every church is competent to arrange for itself, and which do not involve any of the essential truths of revelation. The *handing down* was only from Paul to the Corinthians, and did not include any previous links in a chain, by which it might be connected with previous antiquity; neither is it accompanied with any injunction to convey the same to future generations. So far indeed as the subject of these ordinances or traditions is stated in this letter, it has become written truth; it thereby loses the character of oral tradition (to sanction the principle of which this passage is sometimes cited), and receives the character of God's revealed word written for our learning. Every statement, which professes to have reference to the connection between God and man (whether present or future) must be brought to the test of the written word; and received only so far as it can be shewn to be in accordance with that one and only rule of faith.

64. While there was a general consent to the arrangements originally made by the apostle in the church of Corinth, and an adoption of the order of propriety which he had suggested; there were several particulars in which the custom of the Corinthian christians sanctioned conduct entirely inconsistent with the principles he had laid down. This is too much the case in the present day, in a country where the church acts upon the apostolic principles, in the order of its external arrangement. How many there are, who are satisfied with approving of the church services upon the whole, who nevertheless act most inconsistently in the particular sphere in which they walk. This general remark may be applied by the conscience to cases of much more serious character, than that alluded to in this portion. This case however may supply an important lesson to many, who are disposed to make use of their christian liberty in defying that general sense of right manners, which the habits of a christian community have established: those habits have attached to many

non-essential things a feeling of propriety or impropriety; which cannot be done away merely by contending, that there is no reason sufficient to establish their indispensable necessity. Against such arguments the answer of the apostle is sufficient—the churches of God do or do not sanction the matter in hand. The particular case applies to the decency of demeanour in those who join a congregation of christian worshippers; on which point there may be much to be corrected in many bodies of professing christians, although the covering or uncovering of the head may not form part of it.

QUESTIONS.

What respect do I pay to what is called tradition from antiquity? Do I compare the dogmas founded upon such authority, with the statements of the inspired word of God; and reject whatever that word does not warrant? What distinction do I make between the supposed authority of tradition to establish points of doctrine, and the anthority of the church to appoint observances not contrary to the truth of that word?

How do I submit to the requirements of the latter? Do I steadily reject the claim of the former?

THE PRAYER.

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that I may in such wise read them, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word, I may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given me in Jesus Christ. Guard me by the Spirit of wisdom from being led away by the traditions of men from the truth of thy revealed word; and whilst thou enablest me to retain that truth in all things necessary to salvation, enable me also humbly to submit to all such arrangements in the church as may tend to good order, and reverence in worship, to the glory of the name of the great head of the church, Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

FIFTEENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS XI. 17—34.

INDEX WORDS.		
The Apostle's reproof	17	Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praise *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.
its occasion—first	18	FOR first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions [or, *schisms*] among you; and I partly believe it.
why permitted	19	FOR there must be also heresies [or, *sects*] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.
The Lord's Supper	20	When ye come together THEREFORE into one place, *this* is not to eat [or, *ye cannot eat*] the Lord's supper.
its abuse	21	FOR in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry,
	22	and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not [or, *them that are poor*]?
		What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.
its institution	23	FOR I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was
the bread	24	betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance [or, *for a remem-*
the wine	25	*brance*] of me." After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink *it*, in
its perpetuity	26	remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew [or, *shew ye*] the Lord's death till he come.
the unworthy manner	27	WHEREFORE whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

the remedy

28 BUT let a man examine himself, AND SO let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.

29 FOR he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation [or, *judgment*] to himself, not discerning the

judgment by the Lord

30 Lord's body. FOR THIS CAUSE many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

by self

31 FOR if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

fatherly chastening

32 BUT when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Wherefore

33 WHEREFORE, my brethren, when ye come
34 together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation [or, *judgment*.]

AND the rest will I set in order when I come.

EXPLANATION.

The apostle had praised the Corinthians for having regarded *upon the whole* what he had said to them; at the same time pointing out a particular instance, in which there was much room for improvement. Having implied some reproof as regards that subject, he now proceeds to call their attention to another and still more important point, on which his disapprobation is not only implied but distinctly stated: his former words "now I praise you brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you," are contrasted strongly with the manner in which he begins this particular subject,—"now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not." Then he tells them, that their assembling for divine worship did not tend to promote edification and improvement; on the contrary it rather promoted the wrong feeling in which they met one another, and increased their alienation one from another as belonging to various parties. For in the first place, when they met in their public assemblies, apparently as one body and for one object, yet they were not really united in spirit, but were split into parties. Paul had been informed that such was the case; and though there might be some exaggeration in the account which reached his ears, he

could not but think that there was some ground for the charge. Indeed in the corrupt state of fallen nature, such splittings into separate parties would be almost certain to occur, and God graciously overrules them to the advantage of his servants: who, being led of his Spirit to seek peace and to overcome evil with good, are clearly shewn forth by the course they pursue in the midst of the violence and agitation which results from clashing opinions. (It seems more necessary to give this full paraphrase of the word translated "heresies," because that word has become connected in the minds of many merely with the notion of "doctrinal errors." Whatever may be the proper meaning of the word *heresy* at present, the Greek word cannot be so applied in this passage; where it evidently alludes to separations which took place within the christian church amongst persons who all professed the same creed, and has here no connection with any particular points of doctrine upon which these separations were founded.)

The apostle mentions one grievous consequence of this unchristian spirit of division in their celebration of the Lord's Supper. The church indeed all assembled together in one place, but it could scarcely be considered as really for the purpose of partaking "of the Lord's Supper." For though they met in one place, yet each brought his own portion for a feast (such as was after the fashion of worshippers in heathen temples) those who brought their own provisions eat them in separate parties, regardless of what others might require; so that one person might be without any at all, and another indulge himself to excess, laying aside even the notion of a public meal, in which all should partake in common. The apostle indignantly asks, whether those, who thus make their private feast in the general congregation, had not proper abodes in which to eat their ordinary meals? or had they an irreverent or contemptuous feeling towards the christian church, that they make a solemn assembly of christians the occasion of their intemperance? or do they proudly look down upon the poor, who might perhaps have no fitting accommodation at home for such meals, as those the apostle was reproving? In what light could he look upon such

conduct as this? was this an instance of that observance of ordinances, for which he had praised the Corinthians? certainly not.

As a means of recalling a due sense of reverence to the holy ordinance in question, the apostle proceeded to restate the circumstances of its appointment, as he had explained it to the church of Corinth upon their first conversion. The statement of these circumstances Paul had received from the mouth of the Lord Jesus himself, just as he explained them to the Corinthians. It does not appear at what time he received this instruction; but probably it was part of the revelations made to him during the few months that he was in Arabia. (Gal i. 11, 12, 15—17.) He mentions the words repeated to him by Jesus on this occasion; which are precisely similar to the account of the same event given by the evangelists, the same truth may be inferred from our Lord's exact repetition, as results from his having repeated what is called the Lord's prayer on two different occasions. (Matt. vi. 9—13. Luke xi. 2—4.) This seems to justify the use of one special form, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Jesus had told St. Paul that on the very evening during which Judas betrayed him to the chief priests, he took bread from the supper-table prepared for the celebration of the passover—that then he offered to God a prayer of thanksgiving, and afterward broke this bread, and gave a piece of it to each disciple, telling them that it was his body which had been broken on account of their sins, and commanding them to perform the same act, as a memorial of this great substitution. With the same purpose, the Lord also took the cup after he had concluded the Paschal-supper; and giving it to them, he told them that it was "the new covenant in his blood," commanding them to perform the same ceremony whenever they drank the wine with special reference to his atonement, "in remembrance of him." The apostle reminded the Corinthians that, whenever they performed the solemn act of eating bread and drinking wine; according to this appointed ordinance, they set forth, in a typical manner, that great event in the atonement—his death upon the cross; and this symbolical representation of it was to be

carried on in the church until the return of Jesus from heaven.

Since therefore this holy ordinance was of so solemn a nature, and represented so great an event; if anybody eat of the bread, and drank of the wine, in a manner inconsistent with the solemnity of the occasion, that person would become chargeable with the guilt of crucifying the Lord Jesus, the emblems of whose body being broken, and blood being shed, he should thus profane. The danger of doing this however, ought not to hinder any one from performing the act as commanded by the Lord. Rather should each christian seriously examine into the recesses of his own heart, to see whether he really believes that his sins caused the sufferings of Jesus: upon finding this to be the case, he ought to eat of that bread in token that he acknowledged that his sins were the cause why Jesus' body was broken, and drink of that wine to manifest his acknowledgment that his sins produced the shedding of Jesus' blood. Whoever should partake of those typical elements, the bread and the wine, in a manner unfitting for the occasion, pronounces sentence as it were against himself; by not discriminating between the food of a common meal, and that which is used to represent the Lord's death, and thus using of the emblem, without thinking of the purpose of it, he would be as one crucifying the Lord without a sense of the sinfulness of sin.

It may be proper here to call attention to the real meaning of the two words used in the 29th verse; upon which so many mistakes have been founded, which have greatly distressed christians of weak conscience. The word *worthily* (twice repeated in this passage) is an adverb, which relates to the *manner of performing* the act, and not an adjective, which relates to the *quality of the person* who performs it. A person may do an act *unworthily*, without being *unworthy* to perform it: and considering the whole passage, there can be no reasonable doubt that the extreme alarm, which has been grounded upon this scripture in the minds of many, is without adequate foundation. Not that a person frequenting the communion in a light spirit, and performing the act in an unworthy manner, can possibly be in a safe condition: this however is very different from

the notions which are too often connected with this passage, and which distress the mind with a fear of being an unworthy communicant. The other word, which is translated *damnation*, (and in the margin *judgment*), has no relation to the eternal perdition of the soul in hell; as is often supposed, since custom has nearly limited the word "damnation" to that meaning in ordinary conversation. The word here simply means condemnation: a person acting in the manner referred to would in fact pass sentence upon himself—would concur in the condemnation of sin, including his own sin, by shewing forth symbolically the sacrifice which it caused, he being at the time unconscious of the import of what he was about.

It appears that the irreverence with which the Corinthians had treated this holy ordinance, had been visited by solemn judgments from God; for the apostle tells them that the occasion of those sicknesses, under which many of the members of the church were suffering and by which many had even died, was to be found in the unhallowed manner in which this ordinance was conducted. If christians would exercise a diligent judgment over themselves, they would not receive such tokens of the Lord's judgment upon them: even however under such judgments a repentant christian might be consoled, seeing in it the discipline which the Lord exercises as a father over his children, in order to correct them; and the object of those fatherly chastisements of the Lord, is to prevent the necessity of the greater condemnation which must be applied to those who are of the world, and not of the true family of God.

The apostle then concludes this portion of his subject, by telling them that, when they assembled together for the purpose of partaking of the Lord's Supper, they should be careful to maintain a reverent order by waiting one for another, and by not making that ordinance the occasion of an ordinary meal. Those who required food for their bodily support must take it at their own houses, in order that their assembling for the Lord's Supper might not bring upon them the judgments of which Paul had been speaking. Having thus closed this matter, he told the

Corinthians that he would arrange the other points relating to the church's discipline when he went to Corinth.

APPLICATION.

65. Every christian, who has been able to preserve his mental perceptions from the effects of the mists which have been raised up by the Jesuitical writers that abound in the present day, can perceive that the tendency of the movement, now rapidly proceeding in the Church of England, is to familiarise the minds of unsuspecting persons with the practical errors of Romanism; and amongst these, the most daring attempts are made to produce this effect with respect to that most dangerous of the soul-destroying dogmas of Rome—Transubstantiation. In this position of the church, it becomes important that every one of its members should arm themselves with some of the arguments by which this doctrine may be shewn to be inconsistent, both with reason and with scripture; and because of its present importance, the reader shall be furnished here with such arguments, although it will lead us to a greater length than that to which the applications of scripture in this work have generally extended. The subject is perhaps that on which there is the most direct conflict in the great struggle for protestant truth, against the apostatizing errors of the Romish church. It may be well therefore to consider the main principles which are brought to an issue in the right or wrong understanding of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, a subject which arises in direct connection with the present portion.

As man was originally constituted, and as he existed in the state in which the Almighty pronounced him to be very good, there does not appear to have been any adaptation of his nature to hold intercourse with spiritual beings, except through a medium of external and visible communication. In his paradisaical condition such communication with God was afforded him as suited his constitution. By the fall, this was penally withdrawn; and the death which ensued upon Adam's disobedience, whatever else it included, certainly involved his banishment from ordinary intercourse with spiritual beings—his

repugnance from spirituality of every kind—a spiritual death. By his original constitution he naturally requires a medium of sense, through which, in his sinless state, he was happy in receiving spiritual communications. Sin marred that happiness, and made it misery to realize God's presence. Sin introduced the carnal mind, which is enmity with God, because it is not subject to the law of God,—and the introduction of sin left man a being needing *a* God, with whom external and visible communication was part of his nature, but hating *the* God, and utterly repugnant from the spirituality of the divine holiness.

"The first man Adam was made a living soul,"—a natural man—and was converted by sin into a dead soul, and a carnal man. Then came the second Adam, who was made a "quickening spirit," giving life to the dead soul of man by the infusion of His own Spirit, even the Holy Ghost; who, drawing the will of the old natural man,—combating even to victory the rebellion of the carnal man—makes him, in a high and wondrous sense, a new creature—even a spiritual man; not overturning the original constitution of his nature, but neutralizing the corrupting influence of the virus of sin, with which he is inoculated and superadding higher inducements to communion with God than ever were originally offered; so that while man retains the requirement of a medium of sense for spiritual intercourse belonging to his original constitution, a spiritual man has the vast privilege of intercourse with God open to him through Christ, the Paraclete on high, by the Holy Ghost the Paraclete within him. The great High Priest entering into the holy place not made with hands has rent the veil that hid heaven from the eyes of man, and through the fissure has left the entrance open to the view of the spiritual man; though he is clogged with his carnal nature while kept on the outer side.

Now it is upon this natural requirement of an external medium that Satan has made a lodgment within man, and may be said to have established the strong works of his citadel. A being who, while hating the spiritual Jehovah, craves a god, and has a natural need of a visible medium for worship, may easily be ensnared to receive anything as

God. Hence all the forms of idolatry in the dark places of the earth; and hence, also, in those places where the darkness is past and the true light shineth, the more subtle adaptation of a false religion representing the true, under the power of an impostor god claiming to be the Christ. The whole system of Romanism may be said to be the practical working of this principle in diffusion over every department of Scriptural truth—the application of a medium through which to receive that communication of the Spirit which, under the gospel dispensation, the Lord Jesus Christ condescends to convey to his people immediately from himself. Whether the spiritual benefit intended be more or less remote, the Romish Church establishes a system of visible mediation which is required of necessity; and which serves plausibly in argument to seem to establish the recognition of the spiritual purpose said to be intended beyond, while it acts positively in practice to hide the professed object, and to stand in its place; commending itself to the original requirement of a visible medium in the natural man, and ensnaring him into the delusion that he is spiritual, while, in fact, he never reaches beyond the outward sign that is placed within his sight.

It may, with reverence, be said to be in condescension to the natural constitution of man, that our Lord was pleased to help us by affixing, upon two occasions, certain external signs to the blessed promises he has given under the gospel dispensation. His church under the previous dispensation had this natural tendency strengthened and confirmed by an education of typical instruction: and in substituting his unshrouded communications for the teaching by types, he selected the most important of those occasions on which external helps had been before appointed, and he set a seal of outward act to each of them. The occasions were, the admission into covenant with God, at which he substituted Baptism for Circumcision; and the continual contemplation of the Atonement, at which he substituted the Lord's Supper for the Passover. As these are the two most important acts of a christian's life, and as they afford the only instances on which the sanction of our Lord himself is given to the use of any thing

which might be perverted in the application of an external medium, no wonder that the Romish system should pre-eminently apply its principles to these points; nor that the apologists of Popery should wrest our Lord's words to the encouragement of the error.

It should be remembered that the whole of the gospel-system must be in accordance with the nature of its object. It is emphatically a dispensation of the Spirit; its object is to reverse the whole order of things in the carnal heart where its power is established. For this purpose the Holy Ghost himself takes of the things of Christ and shews them to the mind; bending at the same time the will and affections to receive those things in the power of their truth. In order to effect this, a constant opposition to the natural desires of man is set up in the heart; not only by the Holy Ghost within us, but by the concurring will of the man himself. Yet nevertheless this will, which St. Paul calls the "law of his mind," finds a recurring opposition from the original evil within him, which the apostle calls "the law in his members." (Rom. vii. 23.) The law of the mind acts continually as compressing a spring, the elasticity of which goes out in a direction against it. The law in the members will be satisfied by an external and visible medium on which it may rest: and if the law of the mind can be ordered so as to concur in this, the effort of the struggle is no longer required. The constant reaching upwards towards a real spirituality of intercourse, exercising intensely the poor weak mind and heart, becomes comparatively facile, by finding a point easily within reach to which the heavenly object is said to come down; and the deluded worshipper is spared all the trouble of the heavenward flight. But this is absolutely incompatible with the whole scope and object of the gospel dispensation; every part of which has its legitimate tendency towards the exercise of spiritual energies, irrespective of the imaginary assistances to be derived from sense.

Accordingly, in the manifestation of Protestant truth set forth in the Articles of our Church, the statement of doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper, after shewing what it *is*, shews what it *is not*, by entering a protest against

"transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of the bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord." And after shewing how the body of Christ is received in that supper, it protests that as the elements are nothing in themselves but bread and wine, they are not to be used as the Romanists use them. (See the 28th and 29th Articles.)

Whatever the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper really is, must be gathered from the Holy Scriptures alone. It has been fully established by the sixth Article that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." And the authority of the Church is especially limited in the 20th Article so that it may not "enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation," either against God's word or besides the same. If traditionary records could be found, even of the earliest date, which convey anything upon the subject of the Lord's Supper either besides, or contrary to what the Scriptures contain, such traditions have no authority whatever. While if they only contain what may be gathered from Scripture, such traditions are not needed for our present purpose, as for all they could convey we have sufficient, because superior, authority in the Scriptures themselves. In order therefore to ascertain the true and necessary doctrine concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and to establish its relative position in the range of Protestant truth we need not go beyond the limits of the word of God.

All the Scriptures which have direct or plain reference to the subject of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper may be conveniently classed in four divisions. They may be said to be either—I. Anticipatory—II. Declaratory—III. Argumentative—or IV. Historical. Each of which we will consider separately.

I. Of the first class, the Anticipatory Scripture, there is but one passage; which however has been the occasion of the greatest difficulties in the controversy. It is that in the sixth chapter of St. John which gives the account of our Lord's discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum, just

a twelvemonth before the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

There is a remarkable parallel between this discourse in anticipation of one Sacrament, and the discourse to Nicodemus in anticipation of the other Sacrament. The coincidence between the two may serve to assist us in understanding the scope and purpose of our Lord in both. What Jesus said in anticipation of the Sacrament of Baptism was drawn from him by the question of Nicodemus. Our Lord had informed him that he must be born again, or from above, in order that he might be able to comprehend that, concerning which he sought for instruction. Nicodemus understood him literally—carnally—and physically. Upon which our Lord rectified his error by distinctly informing him that He spoke after a spiritual manner. This was evidently the main object in view; and in communicating this, he referred also to the outward and visible sign which was afterwards to be connected with admission into the church, the true members of which are born again of the Spirit, which is the main thing. In impressing upon Nicodemus the spiritual nature of the new birth, he found him slow of understanding; and then he pointed out to him, that if it were difficult to believe the things relating to the work of the Spirit in men upon earth, how much more so would it be to realize the consummation of those things in heaven; with respect to which he prophetically referred to his own ascension into heaven, for the carrying on and completing of the great work done by the Spirit upon earth. The whole scope of this passage shews that the work to which the sacramental use of water was referred is a spiritual work, and that, without the real baptism of the Holy Ghost, the baptism of water is of no avail.

The course pursued by our Lord in the passage anticipating the other Sacrament was precisely the same. He was followed by a number of persons whom he had miraculously fed, and who had been thereby induced to receive him, as suiting their notions of the Messiah. He told them not to labour for the meat which supports this temporary life, but rather to seek that which supports everlasting life, which he says "the Son of man shall

give unto you." His hearers, not understanding him; asked a sign; and themselves suggested that Moses had procured bread from heaven, by which the Jews in the wilderness were supported. Upon which he told them, that the same God who had given bread for the body to their fathers providentially in the wilderness, was giving to themselves that which He calls "the true bread from heaven;" and which he declared to be Himself. This statement his hearers misunderstood precisely as Nicodemus had done the other—literally—carnally—and physically. And our Lord enlarged upon what he had said in a manner evidently shewing, with respect to this mention of bread, what He had shewn before with respect to his mention of water—that he spoke after a spiritual manner alone. It was faith in him on which everlasting life depended, as temporal life depended upon bread.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." —John vi. 47—51.

No one can reasonably doubt that the main object of this passage is to shew, that He had made use of the word bread in a metaphorical, and not in a literal sense; and that he meant to convey a strong impression of the spirituality of the life which is spiritually supported by the constant action of faith in Christ, as the body is supported by the use of bread for food. And in giving the explanation of the metaphor, he stated, that by bread He meant the Atonement; to express which He said "the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"—hereby declaring, prophetically, the great sacrifice to be made in his body on the Cross; the word *flesh* standing here as it stands in John i. 14, for his human nature. "And the word was made *flesh* and dwelt among us." (The word is similarly used in the following passages: Rom. ix. 5. Eph. ii. 15. Col. i. 22. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Heb. ii. 14; v. 7; x. 20. 1 Pet. iii. 18; iv. 1. 1 John iv. 2, 3. 2 John 7.) Here again the Jews repeated their mistake, and understood him merely literally,

carnally, and physically. Moreover they made a confusion between the metaphor and his explanation of it. He had said, "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever;" and then explained his metaphor, stating that by bread he meant the Atonement made in his flesh. A correct view of this would, in connexion with "the flesh," have applied a verb expressing the act pictured by the metaphor, and not that referring to the metaphorical action. A person understanding that our Lord had given an *explanation* of the metaphor, but wanting further information, ought to have said, "How can this man give us his flesh to *believe in?*" instead of which "the Jews strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh *to eat.*" By this we find, that the Jews merely transferred the metaphorical idea, previously conveyed by bread, into the cognate idea of flesh; as though it was merely expressing the general notion of food under another specific kind of food, which they still misunderstood to have been used literally, instead of metaphorically.

Our Lord so far condescended to their mistake as to take up the metaphor of food under the species of flesh, in which He reiterated the same statement he had made when using the species of bread; and even made it if possible stronger. But he did this only to bring on an explanation which could not be mistaken, of the fact that He was speaking after a spiritual manner, and that to take his words literally would be to find no profit in them; and this he did precisely as he had done to Nicodemus in the other case; shewing that the spiritual understanding of his words was an elementary principle; and suggesting also the inconsistency of expecting to know high and maturer truths, before attaining this rudimental knowledge; specially referring, as before, to His Ascension into heaven, as the grand point which they must be brought to receive. In the former case He had said

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our

witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."—John iii. 6—15.

and now in this case he makes a parallel explanation, thus—

"Doth this offend you? *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." —John vi. 61—63.

From a full consideration of this important anticipatory passage, no other conclusion can fairly be drawn, than that the Lord specially intended to counteract the very error, in the minds of those who heard him, which is brought forward, and with such bold effrontery carried into action, as a practical point of faith in the Romish system: and this view is strongly corroborated by the similar course adopted by our Lord, in anticipating, under similar circumstances, the other Sacrament:—if indeed it be true that the passage which we are particularly considering was meant to have any other than an incidental and collateral bearing upon the Lord's Supper at all, which may admit of a doubt.

Besides this, the unfairness of that interpretation which makes our Lord's words literally and carnally true, without a metaphor, in respect of eating of his flesh, in this passage, may be proved from its partiality. Why should *this* metaphor be selected for literal interpretation, out of a whole cluster of metaphors, spoken at the same time, and tending to the same point? Why should it not be supposed that the partaker of that bread should never hunger in the body, and never thirst? Why should it not be declared, that he which "is of God" hath "seen the Father," with his bodily eyes? Why is it not averred that the declaration that "a man may eat of this bread and not die," is as *literally* true, as regards the death, as would be required by the rules of interpretation that are applied to the bread? When it is said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," why is the life of man to be thought of a spiritual nature, and the flesh of the Son of man to be

understood literally? Why is the dwelling in Christ, and Christ in us, to be a spiritual dwelling, and the eating his flesh and drinking his blood, connected with it in the same sentence, to be taken for literal flesh and blood? The partial selection of one particular point for literal interpretation, in order to impose upon the credulity of such as can despise the testimony of their senses with respect to an external object, is contrasted with the spiritual interpretation of those parts relating to a man's own feelings, a deception in which is beyond the reach of the grossest credulity. For it is utterly impossible to persuade a man without food that he does not feel hunger or thirst, though alas! it has been proved to be possible to delude him with a notion that a morsel of wafer is literally "the body, blood, soul, and divinity," of the Eternal Son of God made man.

II. The second class of Scriptures is that which we have called Declaratory. There are but two occasions on which any declaratory statements were made with authority concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. These were, First, The occasion of its institution, which is reported by three of the Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke,—and Secondly, the statement of it subsequently received of the Lord by St. Paul, and delivered by him to the Corinthian Church, as inserted in this portion.

It is upon the interpretation of these passages that the false doctrine of transubstantiation is mainly founded. And out of many arguments which might be used to justify a protest against that false doctrine, we need refer to only four upon the present occasion.

(1.) It is stated by St. Luke that

"He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."—Luke xxii. 19, 20.

and by St. Paul,

"That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.

At the time that this circumstance took place, the great sacrifice of the Atonement had not yet been completed—

the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was yet unbroken—none of his blood had yet been shed—and his words established an institution for his church, in anticipation of what was about to take place. In this point of view, there is no difficulty in understanding the words of our Lord, as affixing a sacramental seal to his covenant of salvation, to be applied perpetually after the fulfilment of the yet future sacrifice. But to understand his words in the Romanist sense, would be to suppose that his body was then given, not by the Jews, but by himself—was broken, not by the Roman soldiers, but by his own hand—that his blood was shed by his own act—and that the evident execution which afterwards took place upon his person, was not the great act of sacrifice, which would have been done before if the real body and blood were present in the Eucharistic oblation and the first sacrifice of the mass on the previous night. If this be not the case, then the alternative is that when Jesus said the words "this is my body, and this is my blood," the elements of bread and wine, which he referred to, did not become transubstantiated. The rule of interpretation by which this enormous error is sought to be proved, would require that such a change took place upon the occasion of the institution, or would fail in proving that it was to take place upon its repetition. This is absolutely necessary as the result of this interpretation. If our Lord's words then be so taken, he himself in an unbroken and entire body presented to each of his disciples his broken body, including his whole divinity, which they eat and drank; and he performed the act of his own sacrifice. But if this be not the case, then the words spoken by our Lord were not intended to be received in the sense in which they are understood by the Romanists; and therefore, the whole doctrine built upon the supposition of that interpretation, falls to the ground.

(2.) Our Lord especially declares that the act He himself performed was to be repeated as a memorial. This He stated with reference to both parts of the Lord's Supper. In breaking the bread, he said, "This do in remembrance of me;" in giving the cup, he said, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." Now to set forth

that as a remembrance, which was so much more than a remembrance, that it would be the actual repetition of the fact—so as to be a continual sacrifice, applicable afresh upon its repeated offering up;—this would be entirely contrary to that principle of interpretation which is contended for by the Romanists. If the Lord's Supper upon each administration, is only a remembrance, it cannot be also the repetition of the act to be remembered, which becomes then a new sacrifice—itself a substantive occasion for remembrance. This may be adduced as a further illustration of the manner in which the Romanists' rule involves the whole subject in difficulties, instead of making it clear, as it is boasted.

(3.) But a more important proof of the necessity of protesting against the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation may be drawn from the manner in which the institution of the cup was appointed. We have four different accounts of the institution; three of the Evangelists report the original event, and our Lord himself reported it to St. Paul. Two of the Evangelists, St. Matthew and St. Mark, give the account thus. Our Lord is reported by them to have said, "This is my blood of the new testament, or covenant;" but St. Luke states it thus, "This cup is the new testament in my blood." Both these statements are substantially the same: but if any thing is supposed to depend upon the order of the words, we can refer to the mode in which St. Paul received our Lord's own report of them; and we find it to be precisely the same as that given by St. Luke, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood."

Now it is not conceivable that such an imagination could be drawn from these latter words, as that Jesus meant that the wine which the cup contained was actually his body, blood, soul, and divinity. He appointed a solemn act, which consisted of drinking together a little wine out of a cup, in remembrance of the great act of his Atonement; and he affixed to that act, when it was one of remembrance on the part of the recipient, a sacramental pledge on His part, of the covenant of salvation by faith in Him; saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." As the sentence pronounced by our Lord was but

one, and as the statement of it reported by St. Luke is exactly confirmed in that received by St. Paul from our Lord himself, this must be taken as the form of the words; leading us to the right understanding of the reports given by the other two evangelists, in a somewhat varied, though not inconsistent form. And by this we know, that when St. Matthew and St. Mark write that our Lord took the cup and said, "This is my blood of the new testament," he conveyed the idea that the cup, which he then appointed to be the means of shewing forth his death until he shall come again, was to be considered as the token and pledge of the new and gospel covenant for the fulfilment of which He was about to shed his blood. Hence the notion of any change in the substance of the wine has no countenance whatever from the solemn words of institution.

(4.) But not only is the doctrine against which we protest repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, but it "overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament;" which is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." The grace given to an humble believer, which enables him gratefully to remember the Atonement once offered on the cross for his sins, finds a strengthening and confirming assurance in the authorized appointment of a visible sign of the covenant of salvation by that Atonement. Its sacramental character is derived from its divine authority as a sign of the covenant: but if it be not a sign, but the thing signified, it becomes a new act altogether, and loses its sacramental character; which nevertheless is still claimed for it by the Romanists, even while they call it the sacrifice itself. Hence, in order to maintain the sacramental character of the Lord's Supper, it becomes necessary to make that further protest which is contained in the 31st Article.

"The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits."

III. Having now considered all the Anticipatory and Declaratory passages of Scripture on the subject of the Lord's Supper, we will proceed, thirdly, to examine those

passages which are Argumentative. These are but two, and are both found in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The first of these occurs in the tenth chapter, and arises out of the apostle's charge to the Corinthians to flee from idolatry.

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I spenk as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."—1 Cor. x. 14—21.

In arguing against idolatry, the apostle adduces the circumstances of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He asks, "Is not the cup the communion of the blood of Christ?" "Is not the bread the communion of the body of Christ?" Now this is very different from stating that the wine is the blood, and the bread is the body. It clearly states that the cup is the *communion* of the blood, and the bread the *communion* of the body of Christ (see Application 58, page 150): and as if to draw attention to this important distinction, he adds a reference to that point, before he proceeds in the course of his argument. "For we being many, are one bread," or loaf, "and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread," or loaf; where, by the introduction of the word "for," or because, he fixes attention to the point of the preceding statement, and marks that it is the communion to which he alludes, and not the elements. He then proceeds in his argument to use an illustration taken from the sacrifices in the temple. He says, amongst the Jews, "Are not they which eat of the sacrifices in communion with the altar?" for the same word is used here, as had been used in the previous verse. He then disclaims the inference which some might have been disposed to draw from his words; that by bringing the act of sacrifice in an idol's temple in comparison with the act of sacrifice in the temple of God, he might seem to justify the notion that an idol was

anything at all but a material substance; and, having set that aside, he states that what the heathen sacrificed was a sacrifice not done to a material image, but to evil angels, even to devils, and not to God; and then suggests the inference to which his argument pointed, by saying that he did not desire that they should be in communion with devils: forcing upon them the practical result, that they cannot "drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils;" they cannot be "partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." Now in the course of this argument, the apostle puts the receiving of the Lord's Supper upon the same footing with the eating of the sacrifices under the Jewish dispensation, in order to convince the Corinthian christians that a communion similar in its kind takes place in eating and drinking bread and wine in the Lord's Supper; and, distinctly inferring that a communion, also similar in its kind, takes place between the heathen and devils in their sacrifices, he argues, that they cannot do both the one and the other—they cannot hold communion with devils by performing the heathen sacrifices, and at the same time hold communion with Christ by partaking of the Lord's Supper.

It seems utterly inconceivable that the apostle should have made use of this argument, if the act of partaking of the Lord's Supper had been what the Romish error supposes it to be—the "actual receiving of Jesus Christ himself, true God and true man,—his very flesh and blood, with his soul and divinity," which are the words in the Romish Catechism. It may indeed be alledged that, as the greater includes the lesser, communion with Christ is included in such a participation. But the Romanist would gain nothing by conceding this point, since the argument of the apostle is based upon the fact that a similar communion takes place, as in the Jewish and the heathen sacrifices, and no proof for anything beyond such a similarity of communion can by any means be gathered from this passage; while, on the other hand, it is utterly repugnant to every feeling of reverence and propriety, as well as of due symmetry in reasoning, that the apostle should have desecrated so holy a thing as the partaking of the very flesh, blood, soul, and divinity of our Lord

Jesus Christ, true God and true man, by ranging it, even in thought, with the eating of the Jewish sacrifices, much less with the heathen demoniacal communion.

(2.) The second passage, in which an argumentative use is made of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, occurs in the present portion. It was for the purpose of this argument that the apostle re-states the original institution of the Lord's Supper, as he had received it from Christ; and puts the Corinthians in mind that it had formed part of his original instructions to them.

In the argument which he founded upon this statement, he first states the fact, that as the Lord had affixed the seal of his covenant to the administration of the Sacrament, as often as it was drank in remembrance of him, so, as often as christians eat that bread and drink that cup, they proclaim the Lord's death in anticipation of his coming again. The usual meaning of the word which is translated "shew forth," is to declare plainly—to proclaim—to preach—to publish. (It is translated in other parts of the New Testament—to preach—to teach—and to speak.) "Wherefore,"—that is, because of this result of the administration of the Lord's Supper, that it serves to proclaim Christ's death—whoever eats and drinks these elements unworthily—in an improper manner, whether the unfitness be internal or external—shall be obnoxious to the charge of guilt, even of the body and blood of the Lord. He bids a man therefore examine himself, in order that he may participate worthily; seeing that the unworthy participation involves judgment, not discerning the Lord's body,—that is, not in the elements, but in the act of eating and drinking: or, in consistency with the previous part of his argument, not perceiving that he was shewing forth the Lord's death till he come. He proceeds to instance some of the effects of judgment which had already occurred.

But the result which he thus enforced refers to an abuse, which he had stated before he recited the institution of the Lord's Supper. The apostle gives this abuse as an instance of the divisions, or schisms, which he hears exist in the church of Corinth. And he says

"When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the

Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."—1 Cor. xi. 20—22.

Then he proceeds to treat this offence in the manner we have already examined; concluding with the admonition —"When ye come together, my brethren, tarry one for another." But to see how this passage bears upon the point before us, let us imagine for a moment that the apostle, under the power of the divine Spirit, knew that "the body and blood, and soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ were really and truly present, under the appearances of bread and wine," at every consecration of the elements in the Corinthian church;—and that both the "body and blood of Christ existed under the appearance of bread," and both the "body and blood of Christ existed under the appearance of wine;"—that there was Christ whole and entire, true God and true man, under the taste, colour, and form of bread and of wine, constituting the appearance of each. Let us conceive further that he had instructed his Corinthian converts in this doctrine, and that they knew it as well as he. Then let us endeavour, if we can, to place ourselves in the apostle's position, when he hears that his Corinthian converts had made this awful mystery a common meal—a mere act of feasting, in which pride had cast out the poor, and given them nothing; and intemperance had added drunkenness to thirst, so that one was hungry, and another was drunken—drunken! by an inordinate indulgence in that which, under the taste, colour, and form of wine, was known and at the time declared to be in very deed the body, blood, soul, and divinity of the true God and true man, our Lord Jesus Christ! Alas! it is one of the painful consequences of the abominable errors of Rome, that in combating them the mind is necessarily brought into contact with thoughts the most revolting.

Awful as it is to contemplate such a case, the thought is still more shocking when we force it further, and find the apostle dealing with this insufferable blasphemy with a tenderness like Eli's, "Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear." "Wherefore, my brethren, tarry one

for another:" and this the same apostle whose fervent zeal delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan, and commanded excommunication on the railer and extortioner. It is absolutely impossible that the fervour of St. Paul should fall so infinitely below the warmth which characterises his whole jealousy for the Lord's honour, and be so different, even from that indignation which rises in *our* hearts, far as we are behind the apostle's spiritual attainments, at the bare suggestion of so revolting a crime.

While therefore, there is no word in the argument which goes to justify the dogma of transubstantiation; the whole scope of it, and the apostle's mode of applying it, are wholly at variance from the monstrous assumption.

IV. It remains to consider the fourth division of the Scriptures referring to the subject—those which are Historical. These are very few; sufficient to establish the fact historically, that the institution of our blessed Lord was joyfully and profitably acted upon, but nothing more. The passage which contains the account of the circumstances of the church, upon the first descent of the Holy Ghost, makes a general statement of the fact, that the members of the church "continued stedfastly in breaking of bread" (Acts ii. 42); and also that as long as they were all together at Jerusalem, they continued to frequent the temple for public worship; while they partook of this special token of their christian profession at home, as distinguished from their Jewish devotions; "continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house." (Acts ii. 46.) Besides this, there is another incidental reference of a general nature; we are told (Acts xx. 7) that "upon the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread, and this is mentioned as the custom of the church: while on the occasion which draws forth this statement, it is said that Paul "broke bread and eat," after performing the miracle on Eutychus. (Acts xx. 11.) But it may perhaps be questioned whether this last text distinctly refers to the Lord's Supper, or to a common meal; and still stronger doubts may exist whether the statement made of Paul's breaking bread and eating on board the ship, just before

it was wrecked on his voyage to Rome, is intended to refer to the Lord's Supper at all. (Acts xxvii.)

The only other special occasion alluded to in the Scriptures is that remarkable one which occurred on the evening of the resurrection; when our Lord himself in his risen state, being at supper with the two disciples at Emmaus, "took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them;" upon which, though they had not before known who he was, yet immediately "their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight." Upon returning to Jerusalem, they reported to the other disciples what had happened, "and how he was known of them in breaking of bread." (Luke xxiv. 30, 31, 35.)

It will be at once perceived, that none of these passages tend in any way to uphold the doctrine of transubstantiation; that in fact they prove nothing, except the certainty of the universal practice of the church, in thus shewing forth the Lord's death according to his appointment.

We have now examined every text in the New Testament relating to the subject; and although many other arguments might have been adduced, yet enough has been said to shew the sure foundation of that Protestant truth, that "transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of bread and wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of scripture, and overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament."

It cannot be shewn that the scripture affords the slightest warrant for attributing virtue of any kind to the elements of bread and wine employed in the administration of this sacrament, irrespective of the recipient, and of his spiritual state at the time of receiving. Hence it results, that at no period of the office, neither before or after consecration, ought the elements themselves, as such, to become an object of other feelings than those which are excited by a natural sense of separateness and appropriation to a holy purpose, which should preserve them from irreverent use: just as it is natural to feel a respect for the building set apart for the worship of God, which makes its application to ordinary and common uses shocking to the notions of a rightly constituted mind. If this be the case, it may

easily be perceived what fearful consequences of an idolatrous nature must necessarily result from every degree of imagination which affixes more or less of virtue to the elements themselves; while history will shew to how many superstitions it has given occasion. The practice of consecrating a larger quantity of the elements than is sufficient for the number of communicants present at the time, in order to reserve some portion for future requirement, and then regarding the reserved portion with a superstitious awe—the carrying it about from place to place with pomp and external honours—the lifting it up at the moment of consecration, that an act of adoration may be paid to it; —these are fearful consequences of the original error, by means of which the chains of superstition have been rivetted round the enslaved soul; and men have been practically "carried about to idols, even as they were led;" and that too without even the mockery of a seemingly suitable, though hideous form, with which, in the dark regions of heathenism, Satan has found himself forced to humour the requirements of the natural senses, and reasoning faculties of man. The same awful daring with which the evil spirit presses the very name of the Saviour Son of God into the service of his falsehood, makes him to venture upon the boldness of requiring enslaved man to lay aside the legitimate exercise of his reasoning powers, and to falsify the testimony of his natural senses, so as to bow down to a morsel of wafer, crying "It is the god—it is the god."

But the climax of this awful delusion is, that it perverts one of the highest exercises of the condescending love of Christ, and turns the very means of mercy into sin. The spirit of Christ comes and takes possession of the heart of man—establishes a throne there—raises him above the carnal bondage of his corrupted nature—turns him from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God —places him in direct contest with the principles of sin within him, and the power of Satan and the world around him:—he becomes a spiritual man—heaven is open to his mind—an object of surpassing attraction is proposed to his affections—an abiding testimony of its reality and power is established within him by faith. These are spiritual

things—unseen at present—glorious in the future—and supplying motives not from present and temporal things, but from the future and eternal glories; and bearing fruit which grows up out of the earthly soil in which it is planted, into the heavens where it is to be harvested; beginning in the life of to-day in this vile body, and growing up into everlasting life, when this vile body shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. To nourish this spiritual life—to raise the inner man above the clogging hindrances of the earthly body—to arm him with courage in that struggle in which the Spirit lusteth against the flesh—to draw back the curtain which hides heaven from his sight—and to help him in grasping at the reality of spiritual things—the Lord Jesus has been pleased to appoint a suitable means of feeding, not the body but the soul; of quickening the spiritual energies, and of conveying spiritual help in a spiritual manner. Knowing our frame, and remembering that we are but dust—considering the natural requirement of the original constitution of man—the merciful Saviour has given a sign to his memorial, and set a seal upon his pledge. But as the object of the new covenant in his blood is that, on his part, He will put his Spirit into our hearts, and sprinkle our consciences with his blood; and as this can be discerned and desired only by the spiritual man, so the pledge of the Lord's promise is given and received only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; and in the system of Romanism, Satan has contrived to reduce the spiritual notion, intended to be conveyed by the appointment of the pledge, to a carnality; and to seem to give that food, which is suited only to the support of spiritual life, in a manner adapted to satisfy the carnal requirements of the natural heart. This would seem to be the master-piece of Satanism, in converting the truth of God into a lie. But with whom shall he prevail? Shall it be with those who are really born again of the Spirit, and in whom the spiritual appetite, arising from the real existence of spiritual life, has produced a real necessity for spiritual food? Surely not with these, who as sons ask bread of the Father in heaven; these cannot be put off with a stone,

though it bear the shape of bread—with a serpent, though its general outlines be as those of a fish. The important part of the inquiry therefore lies here. Are we spiritual? Have we the hunger and thirst of the Spirit, which can be satisfied with nothing but the food of the Spirit? It is to this point in each that the inquiry concerning Protestant truth must tend; for if it lead us not to that growth in grace, which strengthens the powers of the spiritual man, in his practical protest against the devil, the world, and the flesh, though it may enable the mind to understand the true grounds of our protest, and engage the feelings on the side of truth in the controversy, it will but lead to a delusion; for it will not secure for us the benefit of Protestant truth, in the day when that truth shall be felt to be true, by those who have most stoutly opposed it—even as, at this moment, the devils believe it and tremble. This therefore is the practical application of the subject, that we should "search the Scriptures whether these things be so;" searching at the same time into our own hearts, to ascertain whether there is indeed spiritual life in us, which craves to feed upon Christ, daily and hourly—which cries unceasingly for the Holy Ghost—which breathes the atmosphere of heavenly things—which burns with affections that are set on things above, and not on things on the earth, which joys in the assurance, witnessed secretly in the heart, that "our life is hid with Christ in God"—and the happy anticipations of whose hope is, that "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory."

While such a one is buckling on his armour to stand in the battle for Protestant truth, he will not only be able to manifest himself as a champion in wielding the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, whether offensively or defensively, but he will experience the power of the truth for which he contends; and will draw such supplies of strength from the Lord's table, as will realize to himself the certainty of his own arguments, and enable him to feel, as well as to declare, that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

QUESTION.

What are my views with reference to the Sacrament of

the Lord's Supper? Are they spiritual? Am I shocked at the notion of transubstantiation? Have I any superstitious awe of the consecrated elements? or do I regard them only with the feelings af reverential propriety during the celebration of the service?

66. In order rightly to know our personal responsibility in partaking of the Lord's Supper, it is very important to keep in mind the injunction of the apostle as to self-examination with reference to the *personal* nature of the search that is to be made. We are to examine *ourselves*; "let a man examine *himself*," is the word of St. Paul. This is often much confused by habitual communicants in the Church of England, for want of proper attention to the principle clearly laid down in the whole Service appointed for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. A due care in applying that service would greatly assist us in complying with the exhortation of the apostle. It may be very useful to point this out more particularly. The minister first announces his intention of administering the Holy Communion, and states that it is to be so administered, not to all professors, but only to "all such as shall be religiously and devoutly disposed." Then, after pointing out the comfort of communion to the worthy or *proper* recipients, he states the danger of communion "to them that will presume to receive it unworthily," or not being *proper* recipients. Here the presumption is laid to the charge of the individual, who, of his own accord, comes, not having judged himself; for there would be no presumption, in coming to the table, in a person who was warranted by any external authority which took the responsibility of the act.

Upon the ground of this danger the minister states his own duty. This is not to call the people to him in order that they might be tested by any rule or authority, and so receive an external warrant to come; but he states his duty to be, to exhort the members that they occupy themselves, in the season between the notice he gives and the administration of the communion, in considering "the dignity of that holy mystery, and the great peril of the unworthy (or improper) receiving thereof." Together

with this consideration, he exhorts them to examine *their own* consciences in a most careful manner, in order that, upon the warrant of their own judgment and that alone, they may "come holy and clean to such a heavenly feast;" and so be received in the character of proper, or "worthy, partakers of that holy table."

The principle is here set forth in the plainest and strongest manner; and the minister then proceeds, with affectionate earnestness, to facilitate the personal examination of the members upon such a point as involves all the benefit they can receive. He tells them to examine their "lives and conversations;" and points out to them how they are to conduct themselves in the cases wherein they "shall *perceive themselves* to have offended." He warns them that if they do not act thus under such personal self-examination, "the receiving of the holy Communion doth nothing else but increase their damnation." He supposes the case of any of the members, under such an examination, discovering themselves to be in gross sin, several instances of which he enumerates; he bids all such to repent, and commands them not to come to the "holy table" unless they do repent; leaving however the judgment concerning such repentance to the same examination which has produced conviction of the sin. He goes on to suppose the case of a member who neglects such self-examination, and continues in such sin; either because he is not aware of his state, not having searched into it; or has not searched, because he knows his state already. He warns such an individual, not that there is any external barrier against his coming to the table, but that his coming of his own accord, in a state of sin, will open the door of his heart more widely to the devil, and produce an accumulation of evil.

Then the minister calls the attention of the people to the requisite qualification for coming to the holy Communion; that is, "a full trust in God's mercy, and a quiet conscience:" to this he adds *an offer* of assistance in arriving at such a spiritual state; but the terms in which this assistance is offered convey one of the strongest evidences of the principle upon which church communion is based. The minister supposes every member to arrive

at the state required by the personal use of the means he has set forth: but in the event that there should be any one who, after trying privately to "search and examine" his own conscience, in order that he may come to the table holy and clean, "cannot quiet his own conscience" by the use of the means suggested, but stands in need of further advice and encouragement, he invites him to apply to him, as the minister, in confidential intercourse, that he may have an opportunity of giving spiritual advice; especially in pointing out the individual application of God's general promises of pardon to sinners. Thus the proffered counsel is only a secondary expedient for assisting the operation of the primary judgment by which each member is to be guided in approaching the table, or in withdrawing from it.

This exhortation is addressed to the whole body of worshippers. The season allowed for examination passes —the Lord's Table is spread—and, of the worshippers whom the minister addressed, some only present themselves as having acted upon the ministerial counsel. Then "the communicants being conveniently placed for the receiving the Holy Sacrament," the minister addresses another exhortation to these persons, who are thus self-separated from the larger number to whom the former exhortation was addressed.

The prominent object of this solemn address is to urge upon the communicants the consideration of the scriptural charge, to "try and examine *themselves*" before they communicate. The benefit of coming to the table in a right state of heart is set forth, and powerfully contrasted with the great danger of coming in a wrong state; but this contrast is drawn mainly to found upon it an affectionate warning, concerning the principle of personal responsibility. The brethren are told, *therefore*—because of the blessing resulting from right communion, and the evil consequences of wrong participation—*therefore* they are warned to *judge themselves*, lest, if they do not, the Lord's judgment, not the church's, should come upon them.

After this earnest repetition of the grounds upon which any person is received into the body of the church as a member, and this solemn warning that the responsibility

rests wholly upon each individual, a distinct invitation is given, addressed indeed to those persons who have so far acted upon the previous invitation as to present themselves; but expressed in such a form, as throws each of them, now for the third time upon *their own* sense of their personal state as the only warrant for accepting it. The essential characteristics of the members of the true church are stated; and those who find in themselves such features of christian character are bid to draw near. This personal responsibility, for so important an act, makes it highly necessary that a clear understanding of the distinction between the true church and the outward and visible church should be before the mind, in order that the value of the exhortation to *examine ourselves* that we may communicate with the church, may be rightly estimated.

In the Bible the Church is called the body of Christ: and the body of which Christ is the head; which means, the body or number of people who are joined to Christ by the Holy Spirit, and are under his power and obey him; in the same way that the members or limbs of a man's body move about, and do what, in his head, the man thinks and intends to do. Eph. i. 22, 23. Col. i. 18, 24. John xiv. 16—18, 23; xv. 4; xvii. 20—23. Rom. viii. 1. No one can be for ever with God in heaven hereafter (that is, can be saved from perishing), except those who are thus joined to Christ—the Church, so spoken of in the Bible. John iii. 16—18, 36. Acts iv. 12; xiii. 38. 1 Cor. iii. 11. 1 John v. 12. All persons who are so joined to Christ (and therefore saved) must have this work of the Holy Spirit begun in them *while they are in this life.* If they go out of this life without it, they cannot possibly be joined to Christ (or be saved) after their death. Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3, 5; ix. 4. Eccles. ix. 10. 2 Cor. vi. 2. Rev. v. 9, 10. When the work of the Holy Spirit has begun in people, it makes them desire to live accordingly —they leave off bad ways and follow good ways—and they are willing to acknowledge that they look for salvation only by the name and power of Jesus Christ. Rom. viii. 1—14. Gal. v. 22—25. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Titus ii. 11 —14. Gal. vi. 14.

God knows exactly in whom the work of the Holy

Spirit has begun. Men cannot tell this exactly; they can only see the outward conduct of their neighbours without being able to judge of inward motives. Each person may however have some knowledge of *his own* motives, and so be able to judge as regards himself. Rom. viii. 27. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Matt. vii. 16, 17; xii. 33. Rom. viii. 16. 1 John iv. 13; v. 10, 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

"The Church" is commanded in the Bible to assemble together, pray together, communicate together, and act together in a great many ways. They must therefore be known to each other as an outward body of people. But who is to decide what particular persons are to make up this outward body—the Church? God could tell who, but he has not. Men cannot tell who, because they cannot know their neighbours' hearts. As people know something of their own hearts, they are the only ones who can decide in their own cases. To form the body of Christians, or the Church, in this life therefore, every member must declare for himself that he belongs to it, by professing, or publicly stating, that which a christian ought to profess. Matt. xviii. 17. Acts xiv. 27; xv. 22. Rom. xiv. 23. Col. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xi. 28, 31. Rom. x. 9—11.

If any person *refuses* to do this, he leaves it to be supposed that he does not think he belongs to the Church of Christ;—that is to say, that he is a christian. He leaves it to be supposed that he has no desire to live according to the power of the Holy Spirit—no desire to leave off bad ways, and follow good ways—that he does not acknowledge that he looks for salvation only by the name and power of Jesus Christ.

But people may deceive themselves, when they think they have these good desires; and so may profess and join the Church, without being really influenced by the Holy Spirit, therefore without really belonging to the true Church. Or people may speak falsely, and to gain some present benefit they may deceive others when they profess and join the church, being in fact only hypocrites. This is very true: but shall such persons be separated from the body? Who shall undertake to choose out all the false members? God, who is the only one who *could* do this, has distinctly declared that he does not mean to do so,

until "the end of the world; and in the mean time, he has forbidden men to undertake the task. Matt. xiii. 24—30, 36—43, 47—50; xxii. 2—14. From this it is plain that it never can be possible to assemble a perfect body of real spiritual christians to form the outward church in this life; and that it was not intended that this should be the case. For some men will always be found weak enough to deceive themselves—and some wicked enough to deceive others. God *will not* separate them in this life, and men *cannot*. Many attempts to obtain such a church has been made, and all have failed of success, while they have produced much evil and sin.

But this makes it the more necessary that the declaration to be made by every person joining the church should be strict and strong, that hypocrisy may be made to appear as great a crime as it really is, and thereby people may be prevented as much as possible from making a false statement: also that sincere people may the more examine themselves before joining the church, lest they should deceive themselves. All this is done by requiring a strict declaration of faith, and promise of practice; while one less strict would make it so much the easier for people to deceive themselves when they profess; and so much the easier for hypocrites to overcome the struggles of conscience within them in order to profess. All the people who make a declaration that they believe those things which the Bible shews to be necessary to salvation, and who make a promise to do those things which the Holy Spirit leads God's people to do—all such people form the visible Church. This may enable us to perceive the extreme importance of obtaining every possible ground for the conviction that we are spiritual members of the true church; for which purpose that close and consistent examination of *ourselves* is necessary, and the care of the church has been shewn, in placing before all the members the essential characteristics of one who belongs to the *true* church, lest any should rest satisfied with the fact of their connexion with the *visible* church.

The Church is often misunderstood, and greatly abused; and that too by many well-intentioned men; because they look to the inconsistent lives of some persons who

profess to be members. They forget that all the Church pretends to do is to make the lips of those who profess to join her communion speak words of truth. The consequence of this is, that the church must be seen in her service; not the lives of her professing members; her doctrines must be examined, and her requirements compared with the Scriptures. The church's profession, which every member is required to make, before he is acknowledged as such, is scriptural; and one which every servant of Christ ought to make. It is the profession which must be examined, and not the opinions of the individual members. There are four classes of persons in this country. The first class consists of "the little flock"—the true christians, in whom the Spirit of God is ruling—working in them, and fitting them for glory. Then there are persons who take up the language of the church, speak as if they were true members, attend upon her services, and externally submit to all her requirements. Nothing scandalously or notoriously evil is known as regards their lives. These join in worship with the little flock, and do all that is required outwardly of the real spiritual members. They are persons who may or may not be hypocrites, or self-deceived. This is the second class. These two classes of persons form the body of the church. These are the only persons whom the Church of England acknowledges to be her full members. They communicate; they bring their children to baptism; they submit to the regulations of the body. The members of the visible church then, consist of these two sorts of people.

Besides these, there is also a third class. They are the persons who do not communicate; but who come and sit and hear: who do not object to the worship, but who do not care much about it: it is a matter of little concern to them. They suppose themselves to be of the Church of England because they have got the habit of hearing a good deal about the church, but without understanding or personally applying it. These persons were baptized in their infancy—some of them perhaps confirmed their baptismal vows; but they never joined the communion—or, if they did, it might have been once, just at the time of confirmation—and they have thought little or nothing

about it since. Such persons do not form in fact part of the church. The door, however, is open to them; and the church gives her ministers power to receive them whenever they desire to enter. The opportunity is before them, but they remain out. This is the third class. And the fourth class consists of those persons who go on living to the world, enjoying all they can, never caring any thing at all about religion; never thinking about their souls, or God, or eternity:—they are more to be pitied than the heathen. The heathen were never baptized—the heathen never had the gospel of Christ preached to them, nor the opportunity of knowing him; therefore the heathen will not have so terrible a condemnation as these.

There is no difficulty at all in declaring the state of the fourth class—they cannot be saved: they must perish, this is a fearful truth! With a mourning heart we must turn to the third class, and feel that if God's word be true, they cannot be saved: they must perish. With still greater mourning and grief of heart, must we consider the condition of the second class—they cannot be saved: they too must perish. From these solemn, fearful truths we may turn with joy of heart to the first class; and can say of them, every one of these shall be saved. The false and the true wheat grow so much alike, the ministers cannot tell which is which; and they are not allowed to attempt it. The church forbids them to make a distinction between the first and second classes; the Lord says, "let both grow together till the harvest:" and the church, echoing the words of the apostle, says to all and to each of them, "judge yourselves, brethren:" "let a man examine *himself*, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

When admission to the church, and continuance in it, are offered, and refused, it is then no matter of judging in any one to say, that persons will not join the church, or will not continue members: it becomes a plain fact. Those who refuse themselves say this; not indeed with their lips, but practically by their actions. The church commands a great many things for the regulation of the body, but she commands but two as essential to her membership. The church expects her ministers to warn and admonish those

who do not attend divine worship; and a great many matters of secondary importance are also required; but she only draws the distinction, of who are members and who are not, upon Christ's own directions. He commanded, in Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved;" and again, "This is my blood of the New Testament &c., drink ye all of it." (Matt. xxvi. 27, 28.) These are Christ's own words. The church says, therefore, that no unbaptized person shall be considered as a member; and it follows that no person who, having been baptized in infancy, refuses, when of proper age, to confirm the vows of baptism, or to continue after confirmation by communion, is in a state of membership. Every minister of the Church of England is bound to minister to the people according to this principle: and as they have not the power to judge between the first two classes before referred to, it is their duty to put the truth in such a manner before the people that they may be enabled to judge themselves—that a man may "examine *himself*."

When the Lord Jesus Christ shall come again in glory it will be found to be the eternal truth of God, that those who have come to him inwardly by faith and outwardly by profession will be saved. Both are said to be necessary; "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.) If this be true what anxiety can be too great to ascertain our own personal condition? While many are sleeping over their danger—while they are passing away from the world daily, the church brings before them the solemn truths referred to; and they themselves repeat these very truths as true.

But both the Lord and the church forbid any man to judge as to the difference between those that are within—the two first classes of persons spoken of; and hence the urgent need of a diligent spirit of self-examination:—each member should examine and judge himself, since the responsibility of his real state before God rests entirely with himself. It is a great mistake to suppose that every nominal professor is a member of the church, whether they join her communion or not: and it is also a great mistake to suppose that every person who does communi-

cate is a true spiritual member. In the case of those who do not join the communion, the individuals say for themselves that they will not belong to the church: and in the other case unless for open sin, that brings a scandal upon the church, there is no power in man to draw a distinction. While however none but the true members, the little flock, will be saved after all, there cannot be a more important duty for every communicant than for each to examine himself, in order to see where he is in this great concern, and how he stands in the church. If our church-membership be a matter to be seen by men only, then we may have our reward here; but we shall not be saved in the day of the Lord. If we rest on the opinion of man at all, (whoever the man may be, whether what our neighbours may say of us, or our minister,) for the reality of our religion, we may have our reward; men may speak well of us; they may judge us to be religious; but we shall not be saved in the day of the Lord. We may be very exact in our outward behaviour, and very regular in our attendance upon ordinances; or we may be less exact; this does not make the real difference: if our heart be not renewed by the Holy Spirit, we are not God's people. When we come to church it must not be merely because it is a Sunday duty; nor to the communion merely because the church expects it of us: but it must be because we know how Christ has loved us, and because we know the difference between the church and the world that lieth in wickedness. If we really understand the truth and importance of this distinction, then we ought to thank God for every opportunity and every help in examining our own hearts.

Having endeavoured to enforce the application of this duty of personal responsibility with reference to the Holy Communion in some measure of detail proportioned to its high importance, it may be right before concluding the subject, to point out some of the more prominent reasons why self-examination is felt to be so very difficult of attainment, in order that we may be watchful in striving to counteract the impediments which stand in our way. In searching for these reasons, we shall discover that humiliating truth, to which every one who knows any

thing of the work of the Spirit of God will bear testimony, that there is in man—in every man without a single exception—a natural unwillingness, a timidity, a repugnance to come into the presence of God; a feeling of disinclination, a sort of shrinking at coming into close contact with God; a desire rather to keep God at a distance from us. We find this to be the case with our first parents, Adam and Eve, immediately after they had disobeyed God. Walking in the garden in the cool of the day, "they heard the voice of the Lord God, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden." Thus did they vainly try to avoid coming into communication with God. We find the same state of feeling in the Jews, when God manifested his power at the giving of the commandments at Mount Sinai. They cried out in terror, "Let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Exod. xx. 19.) And so again, when Isaiah saw His glory in the temple, he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone," &c. (Isa. vi. 5.) And whenever we find in the scriptures an account of God's manifesting himself to man, we find at the same time a repugnance, a resistance, a terror in man at that discovery. This would seem strange, if we consider what God is in himself, and what He is in relation to man. When we reflect upon His glorious attributes, his love, and his power, and his unbounded goodness; how he made the world, and clothed it in all its beauty, and filled it with that which is for our comfort; and how he has ordered the affections of our hearts, and the multiplied sources of enjoyment which they are calculated to produce. When we think of His preserving, fatherly, watchful care over us; and when we, who live in the dispensation of the gospel, go one step further, and see how he has given his own Son to die for us, to redeem us from the curse; and how that Son of God "was rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" how he suffered the buffetting, and the shame, and the cross; and how he rose from the grave and ascended into heaven; and, to complete the great work, sent down the Holy Spirit; and is completing it now in heaven by the same means, and will not leave this work until he shall return again in

glory: when we examine into all this, and discover what God is in relation to us, it is indeed strange that there should be a repugnance, a disinclination to come into contact with him, and to stand before him.

From generation to generation the same principle is ever at work. Whenever christians attempt to have real communion or intercourse with God by prayer, this natural repugnance appears most plainly. Do we find it easy to come to the throne of God and have intercourse with him in spirit? Can we readily lay aside our worldly concerns to enter into the presence of God, and find it all agreeable and pleasant? or does it cost us a struggle? Is it not an effort? It is unhappily the experience of every one who by grace has been taught what prayer is, and who has ever endeavoured to hold real intercourse with God, (even of those who have arrived at the highest advance of spiritual communion), that they find within them, after all, a natural disinclination, a repugnance, a feeling which makes them ashamed, and a wonder to themselves that they do not delight to stand in the presence of God, and find in it all their enjoyment, and all their happiness. When we have assembled in the place separated and set apart for holy purposes, where we are free from interruption by any ordinary hindrance, and where we are not engaged by worldly matters, where we call upon God in the most solemn manner to be present and to listen to our prayers; have we found the presence of God with us without interruption? or have we found our minds wandering? Have we found it difficult to stay our thoughts upon what we were doing? When we humble ourselves in confession of sin before God: is it a matter that occupies the whole heart? These are very humbling questions: and strongly do the answers they bring from the heart prove the truth that there is in each of us a natural disinclination to come into close contact with God? And this disinclination is one which requires a greater power to overcome it, than any that we possess in our own hearts; for the constant tendency of our own hearts is to try, like Adam and Eve, how we may hide ourselves from God, and escape from his presence. When we reflect upon the multitude of unholy thoughts which

the eye of God has seen; when we reflect that He has seen how readily we have received evil suggestions and followed out evil thoughts;—has seen how much our minds have been sullied, and the beauty and holiness of our worship been tarnished by sin;—has seen how much of sin has been mixed up in our service; how much of folly and lightness, even where we assemble for worship with all the responsibility of calling upon Him to be present, and to note and mark our worship;—surely this alone ought to be enough to convince every one of us of the truth, that there is a repugnance in our hearts to come into contact and intercourse with God. To examine ourselves with a view to "shew forth the Lord's death" in his appointed manner, must bring us closely into contact with God; and therefore the difficulty of such self-examination becomes great, in proportion to the force of the principle here explained.

Without dwelling longer on this point, there is a second reason for the difficulty of self-examination to be considered. There is in man a natural tendency to be *slothful* in all spiritual matters.

God has given to man very great capacities and powers for action. Man was not made to be an idle, slothful creature; but to be actively engaged in things for the glory of God, and the benefit of his own soul. As man came from God he was blessed with wonderful powers or talents, and with a pure and holy mind; with a mind that could find its happiness in Him, and employ its working powers for His glory, and in the eternal interests of the soul. It was thus that he came from his Maker. But man did not long continue in this state. Sin entered into his soul, and reversed the whole current of his thoughts and affections; and though he has now the same wonderful active powers of mind and body, they are employed altogether in another direction; they are used to gratify self, by indulging sin, in forgetfulness of God. We find still that the powers of man, which are given by God, are employed very actively and diligently; men are rising early, and late taking rest, and sparing no trouble or labour to prosper in their worldly concerns. What is it

that men will not do to promote their health; to gain a good character; to increase their property, and to enjoy their pleasures; for who is there that labours so hard to gain his object as the pleasure-seeker? But how slothful are all men about spiritual matters. Let them be hindered in their worldly diligence for a time by the Providence of God; let a fit of sickness seize them—a fever lay them low—or some family affliction befal them; let some dear friend be taken from them by death; or let any thing happen by which their attention is called to God; then comes eternity and stares them in the face—an eternity which they are told is never to alter. They are solemnly warned that as it finds them, so they must remain for ever; if living in sin, they will have the wages of sin *for ever;* if living in pleasures they will be cut off from them *for ever*, and no better portion be given them; if engrossed in worldly matters, they will be stripped of them *for ever;* and if seeking Christ and loving him, they will enjoy his presence in glory *for ever and ever*. There is a power in the intelligence which ought at once to change the whole current of their thoughts, and to stir up all their capacities in the service of God. But does it do this? Experience gives us a sad answer. If we talk to the man who makes a profession that he believes this; if we call him to something spiritual, something heavenly; if we tell him to pour out his heart in prayer; if we tell him to read his Bible, and to see the love of God as it shines there; if we tell him to speak of Christ to those around him; if we say this to the worldly—diligent man, how hard this seems to him; how slothfully he sets about it. The Bible is brought, and he reads a chapter, or two, and thinks this is surely enough; and to spend ten minutes in prayer seems abundance; more becomes irksome to him. Man is overcome with slothfulness as soon as his natural powers are addressed to spiritual things.

There is a third point in the character of man which presents a vast difficulty in the way of self-examination. Man is very *proud*. Naturally he thinks highly of self, and estimates things mainly with reference to himself.

As made by God, he was made so that all his affections had reference to God as the grand centre, the one great object of his hopes and of his happiness. He was made a wonderful creature, finding his happiness in God, (as we have already observed), and with whom the Almighty held intercourse in Paradise. There he might have grown on, in holiness and happiness to eternity, in the glorious presence of his Maker. But he fell; the curse of sin came upon him; and now he is separated in heart and hope from God; now every man has a god of his own; his god is self; he considers himself first of all; he follows his own desires and gratifications, and his own will rather than God's. This fills him with pride and rebellion against God. He is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

We do not like to know ourselves in reference to God, because it humbles us to do so. We do not like to look into His word to be humbled. We find something there which condemns what we thought to be small offences; and makes us appear very different creatures from what we thought and fancied ourselves. This does not suit our pride. We are very glad to take our friends' account of us rather than God's. When God begins His work, and his word is set up as a light in the dark parts of our hearts, things begin to look very different. We begin to see that we are not quite so good as we thought we were; and this our hearts cannot bear; it is too humbling, and we rebel against it. When, however, the Spirit of God comes, and sets up an influence against this proud rebellion of our hearts, He makes us agree to the humbling statements and warnings of God's word, to which otherwise we should not submit. In carrying on this work, the Spirit of God impresses us with a sense of the necessity of self-examination. This is what Satan also does not like: and he tries to turn us from it, lest our pride should be humbled, and we should be brought to the foot of the cross. Yet with all these difficulties, the necessity for it is paramount. Specially if we would take advantage of the benefit of such spiritual communion at the Lord's Table as supports the hidden life of the

members of the true church, we must remember the injunction of St. Paul, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

QUESTIONS.

Am I a communicant? if not, why not? Upon what grounds do I consider myself to be a member of the church?

Do I communicate habitually? What means do I use to ascertain my condition spiritually when I attend the communion? How do I examine myself? How often, and how searchingly? What variations do I observe in my state of religious feeling from time to time? What effect have these variations upon me? If I am far from being superstitious in receiving the Lord's Supper, how far am I from formality in that ordinance?

Applications No. 4, 5, and 6, should be referred to with respect to the divisions spoken of in verses 18 and 19 of this portion.

Applications No. 56 and 58 should be referred to with respect to some part of the subject of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper alluded to in this portion.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal God, who hast manifested thy love towards mankind in giving thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that holy ordinance by which He has commanded us to shew forth his death till he come, impart to me the Spirit of thy dear Son that I may be able to feed upon that heavenly food, so that I may be one with Christ and Christ with me; and that I may so eat of that bread and drink of that cup, that my sinful body may be made clean by his body, and my soul washed through his most precious blood, and that I may evermore dwell in him and he in me. Preserve me, Lord, from all superstitious use of the materials by which thou condescendest to instruct my ignorance, and help my infirmity. Keep me from being ensnared by the dangerous doctrines of human

invention, which have led so many astray, and keep them in bondage to the outward and carnal things of Romish idolatry. Teach me how to manifest a reverential respect for all things employed in thy service, without being brought under the influence of superstitious awe with respect to external things. Enable me by the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to approach the table of the Lord Jesus whenever I am invited thereto. Search me and try my ways; give me a spirit of discernment, by which I may examine myself, in order to perceive something of the sin of my heart, which thine all-seeing eye can see in all its sinfulness. Yet look upon me in Christ alone, that I may ever come holy and clean in the marriage-garment required by thee in thy holy word. Leave me not to the delusion which others would apply to my outward actions; but let me ever lay my heart to the line of thy holy law, that I may be drawn with more and more attraction to the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanseth us from all sin. Keep me from considering my salvation as necessarily connected with my belonging to the visible church on earth; and bless me with the witness within myself that by the power of the Holy Ghost I am become a living member of the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. AMEN.

SIXTEENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS XII.

INDEX WORDS.	XII.
Spiritual gifts.	1 NOW concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.
The former state.	2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.
One test—*negative*	3 WHEREFORE I give you to understand, THAT no time speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed [or, *anathema*]:
positive	and THAT no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.
various effects the one Cause	4 NOW there are diversities of gifts, BUT the same Spirit.
	5 AND there are differences of administrations [or, *ministeries*], BUT the same Lord.
	6 AND there are diversities of operations, BUT it is the same God which worketh all in all.
why given	7 BUT the manifestation of the Spirit is given to
	8 every man to profit withal. FOR to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge
from the same Source	by the same Spirit;
	9 To another faith by the same Spirit; To another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
	10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *divers* kind of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:
as He will	11 BUT all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.
CHRIST's body illustrated	12 FOR as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ.
One Spirit	13 FOR by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles [*Greeks*], whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

many members necessarily so

14 For the body is not one member, but many.
15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore
16 not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the
17 body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

as God willeth

18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased
19 him. And if they were all one member,
20 where *were* the body? But now *are they*

each needful

21 many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet,
22 I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to
23 be more feeble, are necessary: and those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow [or, *put on*] more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant come-
24 liness. For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that
25 *part* which lacked: that there should be no schism [or, *division*] in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one
26 for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Illustration applied

27 Now ye are the body of Christ,
and members in particular.

gradations

28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities [or, *kinds*] of tongues.

confusion without gradation

29 *Are* all apostles? *are* all prophets? *are* all teachers? *are* all workers of miracles [or,
30 *powers*]? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

The best gifts yet a better way

31 But covet earnestly the best gifts:
and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

EXPLANATION.

The Apostle had now concluded his reproof of the abuses connected with the administration of the Lord's Supper amongst the Corinthians, and he turns to another subject. It does not appear whether the classification of

those persons who were possessed of superior gifts of the Spirit, and their relative claims to honor in the church, formed part of the enquiries which were the subjects of the letter that Paul had received from Corinth, and to which he was replying (chap. vii. 1); but very probably these points had been in some way referred to. At all events, the actual state of the Corinthian church in this respect called for the explanation and instruction, which occupies the twelfth, thirteenth, and forteenth chapters of this epistle.

He tells them that he is now about to enter upon the subject of spiritual endowments, with respect to which he was desirous that they should be fully informed. He bids them remember, that in their former condition, before they knew the power of christian truth, they had been heathen idolaters, blindly hurried along by the force of human passions in complete darkness, without any reflection or resistance, in the habitual course which carried them to worship stones and stocks, set up as idols. For this reason he gives them a simple rule, by which they may be able to discover the working of the Spirit of God in any one who seems to possess spiritual endowments, and to distinguish those who are not really under the influence of the divine Spirit. No one who blasphemes the name of Jesus, or speaks disparagingly or disrespectfully of Him, can possibly be influenced by the Holy Spirit. While on the other hand, it is the power of the Holy Ghost alone that can enable any one, truly and heartily to exalt the name of Jesus, and to acknowledge Him as the Christ—the true Messiah, or to confess him as Master and Lord. It is generally thought that this statement of the apostle has reference especially to some Jews, or Judaizing christians, who laid claim to spiritual powers at Corinth, while they denied the Messiahship and divinity of Jesus: the manner in which Paul's argument is stated gives great probability to this supposition.

Having laid down this general rule by which to test the claim to spiritual endowments, the apostle proceeds to shew what real spiritual gifts are, as regards their source, and as regards their object. There are many and various gifts and endowments, but they all proceed from one and

the same Spirit—the Holy Ghost. Again there are distinctions and degrees in the various orders of ministry that are appointed in the church, but they all derive their appointment and power from one and the same Master and Lord—the Lord Jesus Christ. So also there is great variety in the works of nature and grace, but they all are wrought by the power of the same Almighty God and Father, who, in His triune Deity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, works all in all.

After stating the source of all spiritual gifts, Paul refers to the object for which they are bestowed. The powers imparted by the Holy Spirit, and the exercise of which manifests that He is the Giver, are intended to be used by the possessors of them for the benefit and edification of the whole church. In order to shew this more in detail, the apostle speaks of various gifts imparted to individual christians, for the advantage of the whole body. It perhaps may be difficult to ascertain with precision what was intended by each gift enumerated; but a precise knowledge of the nature of each is not important to the argument, since they all are evidently of a character to be beneficial to the church, and are all derived from the same source. To one man the Holy Ghost imparts "the word of wisdom," and he becomes a christian eminent amongst his brethren for wise counsel, and sound prudence in directing the minds of others into the proper course of conduct to pursue. Another person is endued by the same Holy Spirit with "the word of knowledge," and he becomes marked and esteemed in the church for his clear discernment of the counsels of God, as revealed in the scriptures, and the enlightened intelligence with which he sets them forth. Another christian is gifted with a child-like reception of the promises of God, and a simple dependence on their fulfilment—a ready faith that characterizes his whole conduct, and by its manifestation encourages the more doubting and timid christians; and by its proper fruit of earnest believing prayer, brings down many blessings on the church. Such faith is the gift of the same Holy Spirit. On another member of the church a peculiar power is bestowed, by the exercise of which, persons labouring under bodily diseases are

miraculously cured (Mark xvi. 18. James v. 14): this too is imparted by the same Holy Ghost. Another christian might be enabled to exhibit even the more striking evidences of miraculous power. Another might be endued with a capacity, not only of explaining the counsels of God already come to pass, but also to foretell events before they happened; both which are included in the word "prophecy." Another might be gifted with the power of reading the thoughts, and searching into the motives and hidden feelings of men, so as to discern what spirit they are of. Another might possess the gift which marked the first descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and be miraculously enabled to speak foreign languages that he had never learned. Another might be empowered to interpret the words of such languages used by others, or to translate writings from one language to another, without having learned them. Every one of these various gifts and powers are produced by the operation of the one self-same Divine Spirit—the Holy Ghost—who, in thus imparting his gifts, acts as a supreme sovereign, determining the portion for each person according to His own wisdom, and assigning to each the endowment He wills.

The apostle had introduced this enumeration of the gifts of the Spirit, with reference to the object for which they were all given—to edify and benefit the whole church; and he now proceeds to illustrate this view of the subject, by a comparison of the united body of christians with the human body. He first states the comparison, and then applies it in some detail. The human body is one complete whole; and it is composed of many various parts or members, each having its separate office and position, yet all these members uniting to form one body. This will describe the mystical body of Christ—his church. The same Spirit connects all christians together into one united body, by that baptism of the Holy Ghost which all profess to receive, and of which the external baptism of water is the token; so that all are, at least externally, bound up by profession into one visible church—the body of Christ. In this union there is no separating distinction: Jews or Gentiles—slaves or freed-

men—all differences merge in the character of christian. The apostle says that all the christian body have been made to drink into one Spirit; by which he may either mean that, with reference to the true people of God, every one has been embued with the Holy Spirit; or with reference to the visible church, every member professes to have been so, by drinking of the cup in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Then Paul enters more into detail in this comparison. One member does not constitute the whole human body, but many members combine to form it into a whole. Suppose a man's foot should imagine that it did not belong to his body because it had not the capacities and the functions which belong to his hand—would this imagination really exclude it from the body? Or suppose the ear should fancy itself excluded because it was not an eye, would it cease to be a member of the body? Suppose the whole body were confined to the eye, how would the functions of the other senses be performed; as hearing for instance? or if all were hearing, how could the man smell? The powers and capacities of the human body have however been otherwise settled by the wisdom of God, who has arranged all the members in the body, according to his own good pleasure. Had the members been all one and the same, there would have been no body at all: but it has pleased God to make many different kinds of members to constitute one body; all and each so arranged that every one is needful to the others. The eye cannot spare the hand; the head cannot do without the feet. Nay more, the parts of the body which are most easily deranged, and least able to bear the pressure of external injury, these are as needful as the stronger members. While those parts of the body which are not held in such honor as the face, we treat with great honor in one way, covering them up with greater care, and even adorning the parts we cover with ornamented garments. Those parts of the body which are the more attractive—as the face—require no adorning, and we leave them uncovered. God has established such order in the arrangement of the parts of the body, that there should thus be a sort of compensation to the members that are

less honourable, by making them the object of more careful covering and external honor. This is applied in the comparison, in order to shew that no differences or divisions should break forth between those who are connected, as members are in a body; but that each should so regard the interests of all, as to make each have an affectionate equal care for every other member of the body. When one member is in pain, all the other parts partake of the inconvenience and suffering, in consequence of their connection to form the one body, which feels in all its parts; or, on the other hand, if one portion of the body be treated with special regard and favour, being more cared for, or possessing the soundness of health, all the other members partake in the advantages, and rejoice in the common benefit of the whole.

In making this comparison, the apostle tells the Corinthian church that they form, as it were, the body of Christ; and that each individual christian stands in the relative position of one of the members to the whole body. As however God has given various members to the body of a man, some more and some less important in their office, so also God has constituted the church with various orders and offices, to which he appoints individual members. These he ennumerates, classing them in their degrees. First there are the apostles, to whom God gave the highest authority in the church. In the second rank he placed the prophets, those who are either gifted with the power to foretell coming events, or those whom he employs in making known his truth for the conversion of men. Those who are called teachers are placed in the third rank in the church, as persons occupied in the instruction of the members, though with less powers than the prophets. Next in order are ranked those empowered to perform miracles. Then those whose miraculous powers are limited to healing diseases. Then that class of persons who are called "helps," from the assistance they were qualified to render to the superior officers of the church, or to the members in general: it cannot now be ascertained clearly what particular aid they were called on to perform. The next class are those who are called by the apostle "governments;" a word which has reference

particularly to the steering of a ship, and therefore these persons may not improperly be described as *helmsmen;* though we can tell no more of their peculiar office in the early church than what may be gathered from the title given to them. After this the apostle classes those who are gifted with the capacity of speaking, or interpreting foreign languages, which they had never heard.

In considering these various offices in the church, and the distinction that exists between some of them, it has been suggested by a learned author (Bishop Horsley), that light may be thrown upon the office of each, by tracing their order in connexion with that of the spiritual gifts, ennumerated in verses 8, 9 and 10 of this chapter (see page 210). The order of each will stand thus.

GIFTS.	OFFICES.
1. The word of wisdom.	Apostles.
2. The word of knowledge	Prophets, *i.e.* expounders of the Scriptures of the old Testament.
3. Faith.	Teachers of christianity.
4. Miracles.	Workers of Miracles.
5. Healing.	Healers.
6. Prophecies or predictions.	Helps—such as Mark, Tychicus, Onesimus, &c.
7. Discerning of spirits.	Governments.
8. Tongues.	Gifted with tongues in various ways.
9. Interpretation of tongues.	

After shewing the order in which it pleased God to class different members of the church, for the several offices in which He willed them to be employed, Paul applied the comparison he had previously made, with reference to that part of it in which he had asked "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?" (verse 17.) Now he enquires, whether in the church of Corinth all were apostles? or all endowed with the capacity of prophets? or all capable of being teachers? Was every member gifted with power of working miracles? Was every one able to heal diseases miraculously? Were all endued with the capacity of speaking foreign languages which they had not learned? Could every member of the church act as interpreter? Then having thus directed

attention to the pointed application of his comparison, he gives them the practical exhortation. He does not forbid them to desire the more honourable distinctions in the church; but on the contrary, he bids them be zealous for (as the original word would rather imply than "covet earnestly") those gifts of the Holy Spirit which would be most useful and beneficial in the church. Yet, above all the endowments which he had enumerated, as qualifying for the offices of usefulness and honour in the church, there was one way of shewing zeal for the possession of God's gifts, which was above and beyond the earnest desire for every other: this more excellent way he points out to them. This will be found in the next portion.

APPLICATION.

67. The general distinguishing mark of the presence of the Holy Spirit, which the apostle gives at the beginning of this chapter, may serve as an important guide for the intercourse of christians amongst those, who, while they equally profess the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, may not be equally free from the power of the spirit of the world. The regulation of our walk, in a country where many motives conspire to produce outward profession and a respectable conformity to religious habits in multitudes who are uninfluenced by the Spirit of Christ, is one of the great difficulties of christians who aim at avoiding both uncharitable judgments of others on the one hand, and snares dangerous to themselves on the other. In this difficulty, the rule of the apostle is of great value. He does not say that every person who treats the name of Jesus with respect is certainly under the influence of the Holy Spirit;—but he does say that no person who can allow himself, under any circumstances, to treat that blessed name with disrespect, can be acting under that divine influence; while, on the other hand, the earnest claim to the service of that Saviour Jesus, the acknowledgment of His supreme Divinity, and the desire to look upon him as our personal Lord and Master—are pointed out as tokens that the Spirit of God is at work in the heart. Hence a christian can be in no doubt in shaping his conduct, so as to avoid familiar intercourse with any

who may speak disparagingly of Jesus, and in seeking the companionship of those who are earnest in the exaltation of His name, and in the desire for His service.

68. In connection with the exaltation of the name of Jesus, we may observe the powerful testimony to the equal divinity of the Three Persons in the ever blessed Trinity, which occurs by the manner in which Paul speaks of the diversities of gifts, and of administration, and of operations; all of which are ascribed alike to "the same Spirit," "the same Lord," and "the same God which worketh all in all." Each of the Three Persons is here mentioned, and each exalted alike; while the personality of each is established by the agency which is attributed to each. The greatness of this mystery often leads us to an undefined feeling as to the personality of the Holy Spirit, and an equally undefined sense of the supreme divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Passages like the present, in which the doctrine of the Trinity is so strongly referred to, should help to enliven our faith, and strengthen our practical hold on those vast thoughts which tend to enable us to live above this world, in the contemplation of the glories of the heavenly inheritance, to assure us of which, the combined offices of the Godhead have been exercised.

69. The pride of human nature is very apt to magnify the gifts which we possess ourselves, and to depreciate the value of those which seem inferior to our own, at least in so far as we insensibly connect the person with the gift, and look down upon those who exercise an inferior gift, as if there were some comparative deficiency in them. But the highest and the lowest endowments of christians are all bestowed by the same Holy Spirit, who divides to every man severally as He will; and the grace which makes one person able to manifest any degree of christian attainment is derived from the same source, as that which enables another to display spiritual power of a higher kind. Each is gifted in the way which God sees fit, as most conducive to the general advantage of the church; and it will be found in the final consummation, that the

helpers of the ministry were as needful in their station to the end in view, as were the prophets honoured with apostolic gifts. The important thought, which places each office in its right position, and renders every one honorable and to be honored, is that "the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to *profit withal*"—for the common good—that all the church may be benefitted. Each christian is fulfilling that object in duly exercising the gift imparted to him; and each therefore is to be held in honor according to the diligent improvement of his gift, whatever that gift may be.

70. While the Apostle has suggested the beautiful and apt comparison of the church with the human body, he has left many of the details to be supplied by the mind of the reader. Having placed before us the circumstances of the body, the corresponding circumstances of the church should rise in our thoughts. The habit however of reading the passage from early youth may make it useful, to quicken the thoughts by tracing out the resemblance. Pride is nurtured by possessions; and the possession of spiritual endowments tends to nurture pride more than that of any other advantage, as its sphere of action is higher and more heavenly. Those therefore who occupy such positions in the church, as may be compared to the eye in the body, are reminded by this scripture, that they cannot stand alone, as having no need of those other and lower members of the church, who carry on the work which they may yet have the honor of directing. This thought may guard them against that snare of pride that might accompany their superior gifts. The humble christian, whose life passes unnoticed, need not consider himself as no part of the whole body, because he has not been called to the manifestation of public gifts; his position as a member was chosen for him by God. The "more feeble" members of Christ's mystical body may comfort themselves with the assurance that they "are necessary." The weak, retiring, suffering christians, whose main occupation is prayer, and whose hearts are enlarged by deep experience, though it may be in obscurity, by which they are fitted for the expansive

affection that spreads their prayers over the whole wants of the church—these more feeble members are indeed necessary to the spiritual health and welfare of the whole body. The members too that are hidden and covered, whose infirmities, it may be, place them in the back ground so to speak, as contrasted with those other members who stand forward prominently, as the face in the human body, these are not only part of the whole church, but they are those upon whom much attention is bestowed, proving that every christian "should have the same care one for another." Hence too results the comfort of sympathy. The spiritual union of the true church makes the sufferings of one member throb in the heart of another; or the prosperity and happiness of one, lighten the face of another with smiles. All are sensible that the reproach or the honor that is given to any one christian belongs to the whole church. The detail of the comparison might be carried out much further, but these are suggestions to lead the mind on in extending the application.

71. In classing the several offices in the church, the apostle teaches us the respect that is due from every member to those orders, which are thus ordained of God, and ranked according to his wisdom and pleasure. Though it is specially a mark of the reprobate to "despise dominion and speak evil of dignities" (Jude 8); yet "the infection that remains, yea even in the regenerated," often breaks out in the withholding of the respect due to those, whom God has been pleased to call to some service in the church which places them above others. In another epistle, Paul bids us give "honour to whom honour is due." (Rom. xiii. 7.) The absence of humility is plainly manifested by the disrespectful tone, in which christians sometimes allow themselves to speak of those who hold ministerial positions in the church; and by the disinclination to receive instruction from ministers who are not of their own choice, however faithful may be their ministrations. It should bring such persons to a more humble mind to reflect that "*God* hath set in the church" apostles, prophets, teachers, and those other ranks and orders that, from time to time, have constituted the instrumentality

through which the truth has been carried from generation to generation.

72. With all the implied reproof of the manner in which the Corinthian christians exercised the spiritual gifts bestowed upon them, the apostle yet exhorts them to be zealous in seeking to possess the best gifts—those which are likely to be most useful in the church—those that give most glory to God and most edification to his people. A holy zeal for the service of God, duly regulated by the influence of the Spirit of Christ, will necessarily lead the heart to desire the best opportunities for glorifying Him; and that same grace which prompts us to be diligent in exercising the gifts we have, will excite us to "covet earnestly the best gifts." This is totally distinct from an undue exaltation of those which we possess or desire; and is quite consistent with a deep humility, in making use of even the highest endowments. It must never be forgotten however, that when Paul bids us covet earnestly the best gifts, he shews us something better than the best—that "more excellent way" than the possession of gifts, which unites us to Christ by the bond of LOVE—that christian charity, which he proceeds to describe.

QUESTIONS.

In whose kind of society do I find pleasure? Is it amongst those who sometimes betray their disrespect for the religion of Christ? or do I avoid such persons, although they might possess attractive talents in other respects? Do I love the society of those who love Jesus?

Have I doubting or undefined views of the adorable Trinity? Do I strive to attain to an humble but assured sense of the equal Divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?

Do I ever look down with a feeling that disparages sincere christians, whose endowments are small, but who are employing what powers they have with diligence and usefulness in their limited spheres?

What position do I occupy spiritually as a member of Christ's mystical body? In what degree do I sympathize with the whole body, and with each of my fellow-members?

How is my general conduct characterized by respect for the spiritual pastors aud teachers whom God has placed over me in the church? Do I constantly attend their faithful ministrations?

Do I desire to be made useful in the church by the possession of spiritual gifts? How do I estimate those gifts? Do I place them before or equal to the simple grace of christian love?

THE PRAYER.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three Persons and one God, who worketh all in all, impart to me, I beseech thee, such spiritual gifts as may enable me to glorify thy name, and may make me a means of usefulness in thy church. Give me a spirit of discernment, that I may know how to select those with whom to live in christian communion. Teach me how to avoid the company of such as hallow not the name of Jesus;—teach me how to discern those in whom the Spirit of Jesus dwells. Enlarge my heart towards all who love thee in sincerity; and whatever be their endowments, or their stations, make me to feel that it is one and the self-same Spirit that worketh in them, and in me, and in all thy servants. Enable me truly to love all those who are contributing to the benefit of thy church, as members of the same mystical body with myself; and give me power myself to contribute largely to that benefit. With a spirit of power give me also a spirit of humility. Bind me up in the unity of the body of Christ, so that I may truly sympathize with the sorrows and the joys, the suffering and the success, the reproach and the honor, of each member, and of all; and make me a sound and healthy member for the sake of the whole. Implant in me a just sense of respect to thy appointed servants, who are set by thee in their various stations in the church; and guard me ever from a desire to encroach upon their offices. Let me never forget that before all spiritual gifts is that excellent grace of charity, by which we are conformed to the image of Him who is Love, even the Lord our Saviour. AMEN.

SEVENTEENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS XIII.

INDEX WORDS.	XIII.
Gifts without love	1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
	AND have not charity,
what	I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
	2 AND though I have *the gift of* prophecy, AND understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; AND though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,
	AND have not charity,
	I am nothing.
	3 AND though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, AND though I give my body to be burned,
	AND have not charity,
	it profiteth me nothing.
Love—what	4 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself [or,
	5 *is not rash*], is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own,
	is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
	6 rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the
	7 truth [or, *with the truth*]; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.
Love—its permanence contrasted	8 Charity never faileth:
	BUT whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.
why	9 FOR we know in part, and we prophesy in part.
when proved	10 BUT when that which is perfect is come, THEN that which is in part shall be done away.
illustration	11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought [or, *reasoned*] as a child:
	BUT when I became a man, I put away childish things.

now	12	FOR now we see through a glass, darkly [*in a riddle*];
then		BUT THEN face to face: NOW I know in part; BUT THEN shall I know even as also I am known.
all together	13	AND now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three:
Love supreme		BUT the greatest of these *is* charity.

EXPLANATION.

The apostle proceeds in this portion to shew "the more excellent way," than even the exercise of the best gifts which a Christian might properly desire. The miraculous power of speaking in foreign languages was a gift highly esteemed in the Corinthian church. Paul places himself in the position of one most largely gifted in this respect. If he were empowered to speak all the various languages of mankind;—nay more, if he could speak with the tongue of angels, yet if he were without that love which is wrought within the heart by the Spirit of Him who is Love, his words would be but as the empty sound of a trumpet, or the clanging noise of a cymbal,—loud and attractive indeed, but hollow, empty, and useless.

The Greek word that is translated *charity* here, is the same as is usually rendered by the word *love*; and probably the word charity was rather used by our translators, because the love which is spoken of in its contrasted excellence above gifts, evidently has reference to the manifestation of love by benevolence towards our fellow-creatures, without more especially expressing that love towards God which is the ground work of every right manifestation of love to man. The idea of this love to God is included in the original word, and ought not to be absent from our thoughts in using the word charity.

Then Paul speaks of the possession of other gifts, standing high in the classification he had just made. If he possessed the power of prophecy, and was endued with the capacity of understanding all the hidden things which God has referred to in his word,—if he possessed the gift of knowledge so that his mind comprehended all that was revealed—if his full confidence in the words of promise was such that it was sure to obtain the answer, however

great the promise made,—even the faith spoken of by our Lord Jesus which "could remove a mountain" (Matt. xvii. 20); yet if, with all these high endowments, he did not possess that spirit of love, *the charity* of which he was speaking, all his gifts would be of no avail;—he would be amongst those referred to by our Lord in his sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 22, 23), who had prophesied, and had cast out devils, and had done many wonderful works in Christ's name, but would not be known of the Lord at his coming; and therefore with all his high attainments he would be nothing.

But turning from the gifts which might be displayed without personal sacrifice, to the outward acts which require self-denial, the apostle placed himself in the position of one, who would seem indeed to exercise much benevolence. If, for instance, he should distribute all his substance in alms amongst those who are in want; or if he should maintain his testimony for Christ under the most adverse circumstances, even to the sacrifice of his life by the most agonizing kind of death, such as burning alive; yet should these outward acts be found to have taken place without the real principle of love within, neither his self-denial in alms-giving, nor his constancy in martyrdom, would be of any advantage to his soul.

Having thus pointed out the superiority of charity (the spirit of love in the heart) over every gift or endowment, Paul proceeds to explain the nature of the charity he had so much exalted. He does this by describing its character and fruits; and his description brings forth those graces that are most strikingly contrasted with the serious faults already reproved in the former part of his letter. He begins by that character of christian love or charity, that, like the great Being from whom it springs, bears long with provocations, oppositions, offences, injuries;—it is slow to take offence, and patient in enduring injustice and unkindness. With this continuing forbearance, love connects an amiable affectionate good-nature; for the word "kind" but faintly conveys the meaning of the original. In the midst of all its endurance, it has a ready feeling of kindness towards those who are inflicting the evil.

Again, this love is not *zealous against* any person, as the expression "envieth not" denotes. It does not allow the advantages possessed by another to produce a feeling of ill-will against him who possesses them, or a desire to lessen them :—"charity envieth not."

Again, as charity does not depreciate the advantages of another, so it does not exalt and boast of those which he who is under the power of christian love possesses himself. He does not put himself forward, nor make his superiority to be oppressively felt by others. Neither his language nor his conduct shews any symptom of bragging: —"charity vaunteth not itself."

A person may be able to restrain his language and demeanour from giving any sign of that boasting which is inconsistent with true charity, and yet he may be inwardly filled with self-esteem, and under the power of pride to a very great extent; but christian love produces humility and self-abasement in him who possesses it; and the principle of pride is controlled within him, so as to prevent the inflating of the mind with self:—"charity is not puffed up."

The point of view in which the character of christian charity is next described by St. Paul is expressed by a word, in interpreting which there is some difficuly. The selfish independence of feeling shewn by some of the Corinthian church, in using christian liberty with reference to the eating of meats offered to idols, may perhaps have suggested the mention of this feature in the portrait of charity. Love is here exhibited as carefully avoiding even "the appearance of evil,"—not allowing of any demeanour or outward conduct that could be considered by any as unfitting and unbecoming in a christian :—"charity doth not behave itself unseemly."

Love is unselfish. This is a peculiar characteristic of christian charity. A person under the influence of love is ready to "deny himself, and take up his cross daily." If the requirement of a distinct right involves the ill of another, and is not essential for God's glory, he will not urge his right :—"charity seeketh not her own."

A hasty spirit, easily excited to anger, is quite inconsistent with love, which, when it influences the heart,

subdues the violent bursts of temper; so that the person is not prone to passionate impulses, nor easily stirred up and exasperated:—"charity is not easily provoked."

The injury or offence that might exasperate another does not readily produce that effect upon one who possesses the spirit of love, because he is not disposed to impute bad motives to actions; he rejects the thought of evil intentions for the actions of men, and waits for plain proof before he will admit that men purpose wickedly: —"charity thinketh no evil."

Christian charity cannot find pleasure in hearing of the sins and vices of others, the report of which is too apt to occupy the conversation of the world, and in which professing christians sometimes join with apparent satisfaction. Love feels pain at the thought of the sins of men, and is happy only in hearing of the triumphs of truth over the power of sin:—"charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in (or with) the truth."

The word which is translated "beareth" in the next character which is attributed to charity, has for its first meaning to *cover* or *conceal*, though it may also mean to *bear with*. In its application here, these two senses may be easily combined; for love not being excited to anger by offences against him who possesses it, and being pained even at the report of anything sinful, bears with very much, rather than expose the sins of others; and therefore, to say that it "beareth all things," in the sense of the original word, is to express one important result of the long-suffering already described; a result which is stated in those texts that declare that "charity shall cover the multitude of sins." 1 Pet. iv. 8. James v. 20:—"charity beareth all things."

It follows that the principle of love, in thus hiding the multitude of sins, is willing to put the best possible construction on every thing which might seem doubtful in the conduct of another. Taken in connection with the whole context, this will be the meaning of the apostle when he says that—"charity believeth all things."

And even when appearances give but small reason for positive belief that hidden motives may have been good and right, love will lay hold upon those signs which may

give room for hope, when there is no room for faith, with reference to the conduct of those with whom we have to do;—for "charity hopeth all things."

Yet again the apostle puts forth the sustaining power of the principle of love, which will bear up under still continuing provocation against itself, and maintain its hope to the last, under still continuing testimony against others; —for "charity endureth all things."

After giving this description of the active excellencies of charity, Paul regards it in another light, and speaks of its permanence:—it never ceases; it abides unfailingly; it lives through the various circumstances by which it is tried in the present state, and it will live eternally in the future state of glory. In this it is wholly contrasted with those gifts of which he had been speaking, and which are adapted to this life alone. Take for instance the valued gift of prophecy—the time will come when it will no longer be needed: or the gift of speaking in foreign languages—the languages will not be wanted, and the power will therefore fail: the gift of superior knowledge—that which is called knowledge now shall sink into nothing, and utterly fade before the future open manifestation of that with which we are but faintly acquainted now. Our present knowledge is imperfect; it relates to but a small portion of the unbounded extent of God's works, God's wisdom, and God's glory;—and that which the most favoured of the prophets may be enabled to reveal now, relates to but a part of the mind and will of God. But when the great end and consummation shall be manifested, then all that had relation to the partial development of his great plan will be laid aside as no longer required.

The apostle adds an interesting illustration of this:—man stands now, in relation to the glory which shall be revealed in the future state, in the same position as a child stands, in relation to the period of mature manhood. And as he requires in his infant years things suited to his capacity, which are given up when he attains maturity; so now the christian church has need of things which, in the future condition, shall cease to be required. A child speaks as a child, comprehends as a child, thinks as a child, but

when grown up to be a man, he lays aside the thoughts and occupations of his childhood.

Paul gives another illustration, by representing the manner in which objects are seen imperfectly, either by reflection in a mirror, or through the transparent stones or other substances which in those days were used in the place of our glass windows, and through which the outline of objects was but faintly traced. In looking at the things of God and of heaven, we trace them but as through such a medium; and are able to understand them only as in the obscurity of an enigma, (which is the meaning of the original word); but hereafter, in the great day of the Lord, all will be seen, as when men look on each other face to face. The knowledge of the best instructed, how partial is it now! but in that future state, we shall be endued with knowledge like that by which we are known of God.

Without reference then to any of the gifts which are merely required and adapted to our present imperfect condition, the grand influencing and operating motives of the christian's heart abide and remain, ripening from their present immaturity, to their future fruition. Faith will remain in our future condition; and when its *evidence* will no longer be needed because of sight, its substance will be enjoyed as an abiding and mature *confidence* in Him in whom we now believe. Hope will abide; and the realizing of those unspeakable joys, which our hope now longs for, will establish the abiding expectation of their continuance and increase. Love will abide; and as we shall enter at once into the full experience of the depths of its joys, and as it will be the one combining principle that will unite the family of God in heaven and on earth, in perfect symmetry, and unruffled peace, surely it stands before either faith or hope;—for "the greatest of these is charity."

APPLICATION.

73. This chapter may be considered as the divine application of all the special instruction conveyed in the previous chapters. It describes the "more excellent way" of glorifying God, than by the exercise of any, even the best of the gifts before specified. Many of

those gifts have been withdrawn from the church. The supernatural knowledge of languages no longer exists;—the miraculous power of healing diseases is not now vouchsafed, as it was at Corinth when the apostle wrote;—but the corrupt heart of man is the same now as it was then, and is equally prone to pride itself on gifts and talents which may be possessed in an ordinary degree. It is therefore equally important to us, as to the Corinthians, to know that no power of eloquence, or knowledge, or wisdom, or discernment of character—no combination of talents can compensate in any degree for the absence of that principle of divine love in the heart, which, as it is derived from the Lord Jesus, so it is the only means by which we can be united to Him, and the only evidence that we are so united. The existence of this divine charity within us is too often taken for granted in connection with a profession of faith, and so its absence is unnoticed; while the possession of particular talents and powers is prized and displayed, in a manner which calls for reproof similar to that the Corinthians received from the apostle. How important to consider the divine application here made of the superiority of christian love to every endowment that man can possess!—its essential necessity!—the nothingness of all attainments without it!

74. The common error, of restricting the notion of christian charity to the benevolence of almsgiving, makes it important to call attention to that declaration of the apostle, that though he bestowed all his goods to feed the poor, yet he might do so without possessing the true charity—the spirit of love—and then his greatest sacrifices would profit him nothing. It is very difficult for one, not really acquainted with his own heart, and with the spiritual character of God, to disconnect the notion of merit from the act of almsgiving; specially if it be attended with personal sacrifice to the giver. But when the Holy Spirit enlightens us by shewing the nature of God's requirements—that He traces every action to its hidden motives—and by enabling us to understand the deceitfulness of our natural hearts, we perceive how valueless, and even sinful, may be the action which seemed

most benevolent; and we learn that nothing but christian love can make our benevolence pleasing and acceptable to God. In like manner the zeal, which glories in martyrdom for the name of Christ, may exist in a heart that has never been warmed with the love which alone can characterize such zeal as holy and heavenly. The courage that can give a man constancy, even at the stake, may be formed by a combination of motives, powerful to produce strength for the occasion, but wholly without the divine character, which can only be given by the Spirit of love. How foolish must be the self-deception which expects a heavenly reward for an earthly and self-exalting sacrifice of either substance or life! How dreadful the disappointment of a self-loving heart, in finding no reward for its many almsdeeds; or in passing from the proud excitement of mistaken martyrdom to the horrors of outer darkness!

75. The lovely features in the character of true charity are so described by the apostle, that they need not again be particularized in order to apply them. Every christian should habitually gaze upon this picture of the essential grace in union with Christ, until it becomes not only familiarized to his mind, but until he becomes "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.) And for this purpose, we should keep especially in view those features of this character, in which the contrast is most striking with the tendencies of our own natural hearts. The manner in which Paul introduces this description calls us to this. The beauty of the picture of charity is appreciated by all; but it is not often observed, that the peculiar traits brought forward are precisely those, in which there was most deficiency amongst too many of the christians at Corinth. After reading the open reproofs, and implied censures, contained in the previous part of the epistle, we find in this description of the one essential grace of a christian, pointed contrasts to all those features of fallen nature which had been marked for correction. After diligent self-examination, under the reproving teaching of God's holy word, we should turn to this delineation of

the character of love, and keep our eye on it, while we humbly strive so to use the grace given us, as that our own characters shall take the form presented by this model, that we may become conformed to the image of Him who is LOVE.

76. The abiding permanence of this heavenly love exalts it above all other things. While we are cultivating the principle of christian charity within us, we are receiving an education for heaven, and exercising ourselves in that which will constitute the manner of life in eternity. This is carrying out the illustration of the childhood period employed by the apostle. Occupation in anything which does not call forth the energies of spiritual love—of christian charity,—whatever may be the relative importance, in an earthly point of view, of the object about which we are engaged, may be considered in the same light as idleness, or dissipation, during the time of preparation for manhood at school, or in college. It not only wastes precious time, but incapacitates the mind for improving other portions of time. In our present preparatory state, we should combine the exercise of christian love with every occupation of our lives; in order that so every thing we do may help us on in our heart-education for the time, when the greatest of the abiding principles shall be our very life, in its happy adaptation to the object surpassingly worthy of our love.

QUESTIONS.

What talents do I think I possess? How do I estimate those talents? Do I take it for granted that I possess christian charity? What pains do I take to ascertain how far I really possess it! How do I estimate the possession of this Spirit of love?

To what amount do I give alms, compared with my means? How do I regard my almsgiving? as it respects my condition in this life? or my condition in the next? Do I take it for granted that I have christian charity when I bestow alms on the poor? What have I sacrificed or suffered for the sake of religion? Do I take it for granted that therefore I have christian charity?

What natural tendencies in me are contrasted with the

description of christian love? How do I strive to alter them? What means do I take for becoming more conformed to the model of christian charity?

To what do I look forward in the future state? How do I prepare for it? What advance have I made in my education in christian love, for the heavenly condition?

THE PRAYER.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues; without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Give me grace to use all the talents thou art pleased to bestow upon me for thy glory, and preserve me from the snare of priding myself upon any of them; teach me to be diligent in walking in the more excellent way of christian love. Enlarge my heart by the exercise of liberality; but enlarge it still more by the indwelling of christian charity. Make me willing to lay down my life for thy sake; but make me still more earnest in loving thy people for thy sake. Let the Holy Ghost conform me to the image of Christ; and to this end, correct and subdue all things within me that are contrasted to the character of christian charity. Make me to draw all my duties and occupations into the way of love, that in all things I may be preparing for the enjoyment of that state, where love shall abide in its fulness, in the presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. AMEN.

EIGHTEENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS XIV.

INDEX WORDS.		XIV.
What should be	1	Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*,
1st gift—prophecy		BUT RATHER that ye may prophesy.
2nd gift—tongues	2	FOR he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: FOR no man understandeth [*heareth*] *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.
why first	3	BUT he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort.
why second	4	He that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue edifieth himself; BUT he that prophesieth edifieth the church.
wishes 2nd for them but rather 1st	5	I would that ye all spake with tongues, BUT RATHER that ye prophesied: FOR greater *is* he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues,
(3rd gift)		EXCEPT he interpret,
why		THAT the church may receive edifying.
reason assigned	6	NOW, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, EXCEPT I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying,
illustration	7	or by doctrine? AND even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, EXCEPT they give a distinction in the sounds [or, *tunes*], HOW shall it be known what is piped or harped?
	8	FOR if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?
application	9	SO LIKEWISE ye, EXCEPT ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood [*significant*], HOW shall it be known what is spoken? FOR ye shall speak into the air.
reason assigned	10	There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them *is* without
	11	signification. THEREFORE if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh *shall be* a barbarian unto me.

What to seek

12 EVEN SO ye, FORASMUCH as ye are zealous of spiritual *gifts* [*of spirits*], seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

therefore

13 WHEREFORE let him that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue pray that he may interpret.

reason assigned

14 FOR if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

2nd and 3rd gift

15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, AND I will pray with the understanding also:
I will sing with the spirit, AND I will sing with the understanding also.

16 ELSE when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?

17 FOR thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.

Paul's gift

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

his choice

19 YET in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding,

why

THAT *by my voice* I might teach others also, THAN ten thousand words in an *unknown* tongue.

Reason applied

20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men [*perfect*, or *of a ripe age*].

Scripture applied

21 In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

contrasted

22 WHEREFORE tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not:
BUT prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Illustration

23 If THEREFORE the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24 BUT if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25 AND THUS are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Confusion

26 How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a

tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.
Let all things be done unto edifying.

how rectify it — 27 If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course;
28 AND let one interpret. BUT if there be no interpreter,
let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.
29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let
30 the other judge. IF *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

Order — 31 FOR ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.
32 AND the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

Confusion not of God — 33 FOR God is not *the author* of confusion [*tumult*, or, *unquietness*], but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

Order as to women — 34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: FOR it is not permitted unto them to speak; BUT *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as
35 also saith the law. AND if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

from? or to? — 36 What? came the word of God out from you? OR came it unto you only.

Submit to Paul — 37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.
38 BUT if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

1st gift — 39 WHEREFORE, brethren, covet to prophesy,
2nd gift — AND forbid not to speak with tongues.

Order — 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

EXPLANATION.

After the powerful application made by the apostle in the last portion, in which he shewed the essential necessity of the spirit of love, before and above all other christian attainments, he resumes the subject of the previous chapter, closing the application by desiring the Corinthians to pursue, with unceasing earnestness, the cultivation of that love, the character of which he had described.

And then he tells them that, while constantly following after charity, they are to seek after the possession of spiritual gifts; but that, in doing this, they should desire to obtain the better gift of prophecy, rather than those of lesser value to the church. Paul proceeds to explain the reason for this, by comparing the gift of prophecy with the gift of supernaturally speaking a foreign language, the possession of which was so over-estimated amongst the Corinthians. In speaking a language unknown to those who were present, the person who speaks does not communicate any ideas to the hearers, though his language may be intelligible to God; he may be treating of divine mysteries, under the power of the Holy Spirit, but no one present can comprehend his meaning. On the other hand, one who is exercising the gift of prophecy, in the ordinary language of his hearers, speaks so that he can be understood, and his words may tend to strengthen and establish them, to urge them to practical obedience, and to encourage them with spiritual comfort. A man who speaks spiritual truths, by supernatural power in a foreign language, may himself be built up by what he speaks; but a man who exercises the spiritual gift of prophecy is thereby building up the church by the divine truths he utters.

Paul shews the value that he puts upon the gift of tongues, by telling the Corinthians that he should be glad if every one of them were endowed with that gift; but he proceeds to shew its relative position of inferiority, by saying, that any one who was divinely enabled to prophesy stood higher in the church, than a person who could miraculously speak foreign languages; unless indeed, while speaking in an unknown tongue, he was enabled also to convey the sense of what he had said in the language of the hearers, that by this means the church might receive the benefit, to the edification of its members. This he proceeds to illustrate. Supposing he were to go to Corinth, and address the assembled church there in languages which he was supernaturally empowered to speak, what benefit would result to the hearers, unless he removed the veil of an unknown language from the thoughts which it covered?—unless what he said was

brought within the reach of their knowledge?—unless the sense of his words had the effect of prophesying?—unless they conveyed instruction to the hearers? (There is great difficulty in the proper arrangement of an interpretation of the four words here employed by the apostle, given in our translation as "by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine;" the sense is here suggested, without intending to decide on a solution of the critical difficulty.) This illustration may be enlarged by a comparison with mechanical instruments of music,—a flute, or a harp: unless there be variety and difference in the music—unless the notes be distinguished one from another—what effect could be produced upon the feelings, by the sounds that would proceed from the instrument? The trumpet, for instance, is employed as a kind of language amongst soldiers; and by the variety in its tones, orders are conveyed intelligibly,—certain combinations of notes are associated with certain acts to be done; but if the trumpet were blown in a manner different from any of those defined combinations, the soldiers would not know when to get ready for the charge,—or to make their advance for battle in the presence of an enemy. In the same way the organs of speech are meant to produce a similar effect in the assemblies of the church, to the sound of the trumpet in the field of battle; and unless the language used is associated with thoughts in the minds of those who hear, how can they possibly understand what is said? the words would be wasted in the air; or as our English proverb expresses—"You may as well speak to the winds." How many languages soever there may be in the world, they all have some meaning attached to the words; but if that meaning be not known, the hearer will be as a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker as a foreigner to the hearer.

As then the Corinthians were very desirous of the extraordinary endowments of the Holy Spirit, the apostle exhorted them to strive after those that would distinguish them as being the instruments of strengthening and establishing the members of the church. To this end, when a man was gifted with the power of speaking in a foreign language, he ought rather to pray that God would vouchsafe to

give him the needful gift of the power of rendering what was revealed to him into plain language, that those who hear him can understand. If he make use of a foreign language while praying in public, his spirit indeed may approach God in prayer, but the exercises of his mind would be without any beneficial result to those present at the time. But how ought a christian to act? the apostle says that he would combine the two objects, he would commune with God with his spirit, and in praying publicly would so express himself, that the manner in which his mind acted in prayer should be plain and intelligible to others. So also when singing in the congregation, he would shew forth the praises of God not only with his voice, but with a spiritual rejoicing of heart; and at the same time, he would so sing those praises, that they should be understood, not only by himself, but by the hearers. If this be not the case, a christian may be indeed ascribing blessing and thanks to God with his own spirit, but those who do not understand the language, being therefore as foreigners before him, could not add the hearty amen to a song of praise which must be unintelligible to them. The speaker, offering his own thanks with his heart, may be doing it in an acceptable manner before God; but the hearer not following the thoughts with the heart, cannot receive any benefit. Paul takes this occasion to return thanks to God for the gifts of this kind with which he was endowed; none of the Corinthians had been enabled to speak so many foreign languages as he had. Yet he declares that, when he was in the midst of a congregation of christians, he would rather address a few words to them in the language which expressed his thoughts intelligibly to his hearers, in order to convey instruction to them, than display his gifts by delivering a long discourse in a foreign language. After this declaration of his own feelings, he entreats his fellow-christians at Corinth not to encourage the childish notion, that the admiration produced by the wonder of speaking a language that has never been learned is to be compared with the advantage to be obtained from the declaration of God's mind and will. Such thoughts were worthy only of the minds of children. They ought to be like children indeed—like very infants

in respect to the angry passions of the heart: by the new birth of the Spirit they should become as little children in this respect; but in the exercise of judgment and wisdom, they should act as if they had attained to the maturity of men.

The combined thought of the gift of tongues, with this progress from childhood to maturity in the things of the Holy Spirit, seems here to have suggested to the apostle's mind, the remembrance of that passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, in which the prophet connects the threat that God will speak to the Jews "with stammering lips, and with another tongue," with their refusing to hear the words of rest that were taught to "them that were weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast," although there had been "precept upon precept, line upon line" (Isa. xxviii. 9—13); and he quoted a part of that scripture. He does not explain the course of the argument in which the quotation is applied to the case before him; and this has given rise to much difficulty amongst the critics. It appears however to be only an adaptation of the text he quotes, by which he points out the manner in which the language of foreigners was spoken of in the Old Testament (called by the general term "the law"), as a means of chastisement to the Jews.

After having given in detail the proper view of the subject, the apostle concludes from what had been stated, that the supernatural gift of speaking foreign languages was not especially intended for the conviction of those who had already embraced the truth; but rather as a token of the power of God, in order to convince persons who did not believe the divine authority of the gospel, that those who preached it were really commissioned to do so from on high. (Acts ii. 6—13.) While on the other hand, the supernatural gift of prophesying was not especially intended to be exercised for unbelieving persons, but rather for the edification of those who had received the gospel, and already acknowledged its truth. Upon the occasion therefore of public worship, when a general congregation was assembled, if every body were to exercise his gift of speaking foreign tongues, what would be thought by some person who should attend, but who was unacquainted with

strange languages; or by some heathen, or Jew, who was present? would not such persons look upon the christians as having lost their senses? On the contrary, if every one endowed with the gift of prophecy, were to exercise that gift properly in the congregation, and a heathen or Jew were to come in, or one unacquainted with christian truth; the effect of what all the gifted persons said, would be to awaken the conscience of the stranger, and to produce that conviction of sin which would lead him to understand the condemnation due to sin. And by this means, the word of God, which is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12), would expose to himself the secret corruption of his own heart. This would lead him to join in the worship of God in the humble posture of a sinner; and being thus converted, he would advocate the cause of christianity which he before opposed, and publicly declare that it is the religion of the true God.

But what was the fact as regarded the assemblies of the church at Corinth? Upon each occasion of public worship, disorder and confusion resulted from the manner in which every person strove to shew their gifts. One sang a psalm in token of praise,—another urged attention to some special doctrine,—another spoke in a foreign language,—another delivered some particular truth revealed to him by the gift of prophecy—another explained the instruction or the language of some gifted person. As a remedy for such confusion, the apostle charges the Corinthians to take care that every thing in the worship of God should be conducted with proper reverence, and regular arrangement. In exercising the gift of tongues, only two, or at most three persons should be permitted to speak upon the same occasion of worship;—they should follow one another in order, and some one present should render the sense of what was spoken, into the language of the people. Should it happen that no person present could interpret, then he who had the gift of tongues must refrain from using it upon that occasion, and be satisfied with an inward sense of what God revealed to him, and secret communion with God.

In the same manner, those gifted with prophecy should be limited to two or three during one service of the church, who should deliver their prophecies, while the other persons present consider and decide whether they are speaking by the Spirit or not. The word "other" is plural; but it may be a question whether the other prophets are meant, or the other members of the church forming the congregation. If while one is speaking, another is specially gifted with some revelation, both must not speak at the same time; but he who was first prophesying must be silent, and give place to the other. All may exercise their gift of prophesying, so that they do it one after another, and that two be not allowed to speak together. By this means all the congregation may be instructed, and all may receive the comforting benefits of the gifts that are bestowed. There need be no difficulty in effecting this; for though the Holy Spirit employs the natural powers of a man for the purpose, yet the direction of his own mind is under the control of the man; and the spirits of those who prophesy may be restrained by them, so that they need not speak if they determine not to do so. This control is left to them, because God does not cause disorder or tumultuous confusion, but quite the contrary—He is the God of peace, and produces quietness and calmness, as is manifest from the order that prevailed in the different churches already planted.

It was the mention of the "tumult and unquietness" so contrary to the character of the God of peace, that suggested to the apostle's mind another instance of disorder that was tolerated in the christian church. He had already referred to the improprieties connected with the manner of exercising any spiritual gift by women, (1 Cor. xi. 5, &c., see page 159); now he prohibits them altogether from taking the lead in any public ministrations of the church. Paul issues here a positive command that women are not to speak in the congregation, and he repeats it in another form:—"let women keep silence," and he adds, "*for* it is not permitted unto them to speak;" they are to be in subordination to the male sex, and this would be inconsistent with an attempt to teach in a general congre-

gation consisting of men and women. The original position of the woman in relation to the man as stated in the old Testament (Gen. iii. 16) concurs with this.

While the apostle forbids a woman to teach publicly, he prevents the occasion for her asking any questions in a congregation, (which was probably one means by which females had obtained permission to come forward and speak in some assemblies). He supposes the case of a woman desiring to have further knowledge and explanation of what she hears in the public services; and he bids such a one wait till she gets home, and tells her then to seek the information she wants from her husband, as it would be evidently unfitting and indecent, and therefore an occasion for shame, if a female were bold enough to speak before an assembly composed of men as well as women. From the manner in which husbands are mentioned here, it may be concluded, that though Paul found it necessary to guard against such improprieties at Corinth, it could only have been married women who ever placed the church in the position to make this command necessary; and that unmarried women had never ventured on such a breach of modesty.

After exposing the impropriety of so many of the practices which had gained a footing in the Corinthian Church, the apostle suggested to the mind the unreasonable assumption of independence and authority which the introduction of such customs into their worship seemed to exhibit. He asked them, did they consider themselves as the original body of christians, who, having been first converted, had sent the word of God forth for the gathering of other churches, (which had been the case with the church at Jerusalem)? Or was it, on the other hand the fact, that they had received that blessed word but recently, after it had made its way in other cities where the Lord had gathered churches before them? The question sufficiently suggested the answer which the Corinthian Christians must give, and Paul proceeded to assume the influence and authority that belonged to an apostle who had been, in God's hands, the founder of the church at Corinth. In this character he called upon every one amongst the Corinthians who conceived himself to possess

the gift of prophecy, or any other spiritual gift, to receive the instruction and direction Paul now sent them, acknowledging that they were the commandments of the Lord himself. If any amongst them should refuse to acknowledge this, the apostle said he left such a one to the consequences: having stated the Lord's will, as His inspired agent, let any one refuse to receive it at his own peril.

Paul closes the whole subject by summing up the three points included in it. First, the gift of prophecy is superior to the other gifts spoken of,—a christian should earnestly seek to possess that gift for the edification of the church. Secondly, though the gift of speaking foreign languages supernaturally is less valuable than that of prophecy, yet it should not be lightly considered or forbidden. Thirdly, all things connected with the service of God, whether in the manifestation of gifts, or in the worship of the assembled church, should be performed with reverence, decorum, and orderly arrangement.

APPLICATION.

77. The first point that strikes the mind in this portion is the superiority of those gifts which were calculated to benefit the church, over such other gifts as only manifested the power of him who possessed them. One who could speak a foreign language by supernatural power was undoubtedly to be held in honor, as being honored of God; but one who was enabled to lay open the mind of God in such a manner, as that others could understand and profit by it, was not only honored of God in the gift, but was also made an instrument of blessing to others, in a degree far above that which could result from the exercise of the gift of tongues. Since the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit have been withheld from the church, there are no means of practically applying this passage in the primary sense of the words: but a powerful application results with respect to the ordinary gifts of God, both such as are natural, and such as are spiritual. In the ordinary intercourse of society it is very common to find a greater readiness to exercise such talents and personal advantages as are attended with display, and

which exhibit the powers of those who possess them, than those points of character, and gifts of mind, which, without peculiar attractions of manner, are calculated to produce essential benefit to those amongst whom they are exercised. We may trace in this subject an easy transition in the apostle's mind, from the application he had been making in the preceding portion. The charity, or love, he had so powerfully set forth, involves the forgetfulness of self in the desire to do good to others. The exercise of the gift of unknown tongues drew attention to the gifted person. The exercise of the gift of prophecy led the mind from the prophet himself to the message of God he delivered, and its relation to the person who received it. And so at present, in the ordinary intercourse of christians, those talents or gifts, the exercise of which is calculated rather to show off the individual than to benefit others, belong to a much lower class, than those powers of conversation and that wisdom which draw the minds of others to the consideration of such things as may be profitable to themselves, in connection with their eternal interests.

78. Among the many marks by which Romanism may be known to be contrary to truth, because contrary to scripture, one of the most plain is the fact, that the Romanists have by authority established as a rule, the very thing pointed out in this portion as being unsuited for christian edification. That which is meant to be worship in the church of Rome is conducted in a language which has ceased to be spoken by any nation, and of which the mass of the people are entirely ignorant, so that the officiating minister of worship must be "a barbarian unto them." But it is also quite possible, that without this palpable inconsistency in actual language, a similar result may be produced by those who attempt to instruct the poor and illiterate, or the young and unlearned, and who may express themselves in a manner which can convey no clear ideas to those whom they would teach. Many kind christian persons satisfy themselves with uttering for this purpose that which they themselves understand, without considering the capacity of those to whom they would

convey knowledge. In order to benefit any in spiritual things by instruction, (whether at schools or in common conversation), great pains should be taken to convey ideas in such a form as can make them intelligible. Omissions on this point frequently occur, from an undefined satisfaction at knowing the subject ourselves, which outweighs the earnestness of the desire to procure the benefit of those we instruct; and thus a Sunday-School teacher, for instance, may, without knowing it, be in the position of one showing off the gift of tongues, rather than of one edifying the church by the gift of prophecy.

79. The manner in which the subject of prayer with the spirit and with the understanding, and in united bodies, is spoken of in this portion, suggests thoughts that should be very interesting to the christian. It is with our spirits that we must hold intercourse with God, who is a Spirit; and with what humble reverence—with what "fear and trembling" we ought to realize the great thought, that the Holy Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, within us, with groanings that cannot be uttered. Yet God deals with us, as with beings whom he has endowed with reason; and calls upon us to take account with our understanding of the spiritual motions within us,—the highest of which are those by which we hold intercourse with him in prayer. And it rejoices the Spirit of love within us to find, that this exceeding privilege is enlarged, so as to include a combination of fellow-worshippers; so that christians may comfort the hearts one of another—strengthening each other's weakness, by union in the great spiritual effort in which a sinner approaches the throne of grace. The heart that swells with thankfulness to God quickens the mind to take a powerful grasp, and the lip to give a lively expression to the spiritual feeling; and as the same Spirit, works in others around a similar feeling, as soon as the mind takes in the expressed thought of the one, the lips of all can declare by the warm amen, that the heart of each has already joined the chorus of spiritual rejoicing before the throne of grace. How great a contrast to this perfect

adaptation of true prayer to our present condition is the unintelligible muttering of the Romanist's unknown tongue, or the mere outward expression of the formalist's frequent repetitions.

80. One great point upon which the apostle insists is, that all things should be done decently and in order. Order is one of the tokens of perfectness in the character of God. And had his work of man, and the earth for man's habitation, continued in that relation to God in which they were made, all would have continued in perfect order; but when man sinned, and was banished from God, he was separated from the centre point of all order; and the keystone of the arch being taken away, confusion followed, and everything fell into disorder. In the restoration of man by the communication of the Spirit of Christ, that Holy Spirit sets up the principle of order afresh, which has however to be acted out through an agency deranged in every part—in a body, of which every limb has been dislocated. No wonder that we find an extreme difficulty in establishing a system of order amongst a combination of persons, with every one of whom the original infection of a fallen nature is still remaining. It is essential however that the visible church should make arrangement for the maintenance of order, in conducting everything which belongs to religious exercises; and if this be essential for the whole church, how necessary is it that every member should cheerfully and diligently concur in acting upon the arrangements so appointed, that all things may be done decently and in order.

81. In illustration of the general rules of order and propriety, the special rule laid down by the apostle respecting women may be taken. Females are forbidden to stand forward in public ministrations. The perverseness of human nature has constantly manifested itself from age to age, amongst bodies of professing christians, by the infringement of this apostolic rule. Amongst many sects women become public preachers; and wherever this is the case, the strong statement of the apostle in this portion is of itself sufficient to prove, that such

societies must be in a state of serious error, and therefore danger. But without dwelling further upon this point, the principle upon which the rule is made may be applied more generally. There is something revolting in the conduct of a female who is forward in any public position. Prominency is inconsistent with the modesty which becomes a woman, and the natural evidence of which is a shrinking retirement from general remark. Yet this modesty is easily lost, by insensible gradations from one act to another, in which a female is often led on without knowing the path she is treading; and nothing is more ensnaring in this respect, than the hope of doing good in a spiritual point of view, by means which may at first be considered strange, and perhaps a little out of order, but to which she soon becomes reconciled, who allows herself to feel exalted under the hope of being useful to souls. Those instruments that are made most powerful, are usually made most humble; and women are never more likely to be employed by God as his instruments, than when they are blessed by Him with that humility and wise sense of their position, which keeps the restraining power of modesty in lively action.

QUESTIONS.

What gifts or peculiar talents do I think I possess? How do I use them? Do they lead me into the habit of showing off? Of what advantage have my talents been to others? In what way do I seek to benefit others by them?

In what way do I seek to benefit others by christian instruction? What opportunities of doing this do I neglect? What pains do I take to make my instructions intelligible? How far do my instructions tend to exalt myself? and how far to benefit others?

What is my attendance at public prayers in the sight of God? How much do I pray with the spirit, and how much with the understanding, when with my voice I join in the general amen?

Do I give up my own will, and forego my own convenience, that I may shew the example of a ready concurrence in the arrangements by which order is maintained in the church?

THE PRAYER.

Gracious God, the giver of every good gift, to whom belongs the praise of everything I have been enabled to do that is good, have mercy upon me, and so convince me of mine own unworthiness, and so fill my heart with the Spirit of love to others, that I may use all my powers and all my gifts for the benefit of others, and the spiritual edification of thy church, that thy name may be glorified. Give me grace to convey with simplicity and sincerity every instruction I may afford to others; and that I may let no thoughts of myself interfere with the desire to promote the good I would communicate to those whom I teach. Enable me ever to realize the presence of the Spirit of Christ in every assembly of thy church, accord- to thy promise, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Give me the gift of prayer with the Spirit; and teach me how to pray with the understanding as well as with the spirit; and make my heart join in a joyful amen at every giving of thanks to thee. Subdue my self-will, O Lord; and make me willing to submit to inconvenience, and to forego self-opinion, that I may maintain the rules and arrangements required for the maintenance of good order in the church. Make me to know my own position in the station where Providence has placed me; and give me grace to fulfil its duties with modesty and propriety, so that I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things, to the glory of His blessed name, Jesus Christ the Lord. AMEN.

NINETEENTH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS XV.

INDEX WORDS.	XV.
The Gospel declared	1 MOREOVER, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
effect, if believed	2 by which also ye are saved, IF ye keep in memory [or, *hold fast*] what [*by what speech*] I preached unto you, UNLESS ye have believed in vain.
death—burial—resurrection	3 FOR I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins
	4 according to the scriptures; AND that he was buried, AND THAT he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:
Witnesses	5 AND THAT he was seen of Cephas, then of the
	6 twelve: AFTER THAT, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are
Paul	7 fallen asleep. AFTER THAT, he was seen of
	8 James; then of all the apostles. AND last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of
	9 due time [or, *an abortive*]. FOR I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
	10 BUT by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.
Therefore	11 THEREFORE whether *it were* I or they, SO we preach, AND SO ye believed.
The Resurrection denied	12 NOW if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead,
if none	13 how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? BUT IF there be no resurrection of the
preaching vain	14 dead, then is Christ not risen: AND IF Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain.

witnesses false	15	YEA, AND we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so
	16	be that the dead rise not. FOR IF the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:
living saints in sin		AND IF Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins.
dead saints lost	18	THEN they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.
christians miserable	19	IF in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.
affirmed	20	BUT NOW is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.
death by man	21	FOR since by man *came* death,
resurrection by man		by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.
all	22	FOR as in Adam all die,
but in rank	23	EVEN SO in Christ shall all be made alive. BUT
1. Christ himself		every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits;
2. Christ's people		AFTERWARD they that are Christ's at his coming.
3. the end	24	THEN *cometh* the end, WHEN he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; WHEN he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
he reign *till*	25	FOR he must reign, TILL he hath put all enemies under his feet.
last enemy	26	The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.
	27	FOR he hath put all things under his feet.
THE EXCEPTION	28	BUT when he saith, All things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.
THE SON subject	28	AND WHEN all things shall be subdued unto him, THEN shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.
Else why suffer?	29	ELSE what shall they do which are baptized for the dead,
		IF the dead rise not all?
	30	WHY are they then baptized for the dead? AND WHY stand we in jeopardy every hour?
Paul suffered	31	I protest by your [some read, *our*] rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus
why?	32	our Lord, I die daily. IF after the manner of men [or, to speak *after the manner of men*] I have fought with beasts at Ephesus,
		what advantageth it me, IF the dead

rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.

33 Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

application — 34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; FOR some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.

How rise? — 35 BUT some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? AND with what body do they come?

Observe how — 36 *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, EXCEPT it die:

change of body — 37 AND that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other

as God wills, and by rule — 38 *grain*: BUT God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, AND to every seed his own body.

variety—on earth — 39 All flesh *is* not the same flesh: BUT *there is* one *kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds.

in heaven — 40 *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: BUT the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is*

41 another. *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for *one* star differeth from *another* in glory.

By same rule — 42 So ALSO *is* the resurrection of the dead.

death — It is sown in corruption;

resurrection — it is raised in incorruption:

43 it is sown in dishonour;

it is raised in glory:

it is sown in weakness;

it is raised in power:

44 it is sown a natural body;

it is raised a spiritual body.

natural body — There is a natural body,

spiritual body — and there is a spiritual body.

first Adam — 45 AND so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul;

last Adam — the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

46 HOWBEIT that *was* not first which is spiritual, BUT that which is natural;

AND afterward that which is spiritual.

earthy — 47 The first man *is* of the earth, earthy:

heavenly — the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

48 As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy:

AND as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.

49 AND as we have borne the image of the earthy,
we shall ALSO bear the image of the heavenly.

Impossibility

50 NOW this I say, brethren, THAT flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Mystery
not all die
all changed

51 BEHOLD, I shew you a mystery;
We shall not all sleep,
52 but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound,

the dead
the quick

and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,
and we shall be changed.
53 FOR this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immor-
54 tality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,

Death's death

then shall be brought to pass the saying that is
55 written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave [or, *hell*], where *is* thy victory?

his sting and strength

56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.

The Victory

57 BUT thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Application.

58 THEREFORE, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, FORASMUCH AS ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

EXPLANATION.

The apostle had now answered the several enquiries of the letter he had received from Corinth, and had referred to all the points he thought necessary to suggest for the improvement of the discipline of the church there; and from the details of lesser matters which he had placed before them for correction, he turned to the grand object, a right understanding of which ought to produce a course of conduct consistent with all he had said before. He was led to this by the fact, to which he alludes in the 12th verse, that there were some members of the church at Corinth who denied the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. This being a fundamental point, involving the truth or the falsehood of christianity itself, Paul winds up his apostolic charge to the Corinthians by a powerful state-

ment of the gospel in connexion with that essential doctrine.

In addition to all he had said he now tells them, that he is about to set before them that gospel which he had been the instrument of conveying to the people at Corinth; that gospel which was the means of their conversion at first, and in the profession of which their church remained to that day; that gospel upon which depended their salvation, if they retained and held it fast as it had been delivered to them; unless indeed the whole doctrine of christianity which they professed should turn out to be false, (which he was about to shew must be the case if the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead be not true).

The first and most important truth which he had set before them was, that the Lord Jesus Christ had made the atonement for our sins by his death. This grand truth had not been the opinion of Paul merely; it had been a truth divinely communicated to him, and it had taken place in accordance with the anticipations and instruction of the old Testament Scriptures. The apostle had also taught them, that after having truly died, the Lord Jesus was buried; and that on the third day afterwards he had risen from the grave, his resurrection also having been foretold in the Scriptures. (Psa. xvi. 10.) This point being of such vital importance the apostle proceeds to state the testimony by which it had been proved. After his death and burial Jesus had been seen alive by Peter; subsequently the whole body of the apostles were witnesses to the fact of his being alive after death; at a still later period more than five hundred disciples together saw him alive, having assembled for the purpose in Galilee, according to his own appointment. (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.) Most of these persons were alive at the time Paul was writing, although some had died. Then after this James was permitted to be a witness of the fact. Paul probably referred to James commonly called the less, who was the author of the general epistle. After this again all the apostles were favoured with a sight of the risen Lord. And last of all Paul states himself to be a witness, having seen the Lord Jesus in his resurrection life. In stating this the apostle makes use of an expression by which he would show his

deep sense of his unworthiness of so high an honor. He calls himself one born out of time,—one as unworthy and naturally unfitted for the office of an apostolic witness, as an abortion would be to fulfil the functions of a man. Not that this unfitness arose from any defect or infirmity in his commission, but he considered himself as standing lowest in the list of the apostles; and as unfitted to be classed as an apostle at all, from a deep sense of the guilt of his former conduct against that same church of God in which he was raised to so high an office. It was by the free favour and mercy of God that he was raised to the position in which he stood; and that favour had not been extended to him without good effect, for he had been enabled to work more diligently, and to exert himself more earnestly, than any of the other apostles. Did he attribute this to any power in himself? quite the contrary; it was not himself, but it was God's grace and mercy which had produced all his diligence, and worked effectually with him. By whomsoever the testimony to Christ's resurrection was afforded however, whether by Paul or by the other apostles, the doctrine that he had stated was the one subject of the preaching of all, and was the one gospel by which the Corinthians had become christians.

Having thus stated the gospel in connexion with the essential evidence of its truth afforded by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, together with the testimony of the several witnesses who had seen him after he rose from the dead, the apostle proceeds to shew how this establishes the great fact of the resurrection of the dead, in opposition to those who denied such a doctrine; and to prove that such a denial is incompatible with the profession of christianity. If, he says, the declaration and reception of the gospel includes the belief, that the Lord Jesus Christ not only "died for our sins but rose again for our justification," (Rom. iv. 25), how could it possibly be that any member of the Corinthian church could maintain that there could be no such thing as a resurrection to life of persons who had died? If it be admitted that there can be no such thing as the dead coming to life again, then it must follow that the Lord Jesus Christ has not come to life again after having died; and if this were indeed the case, then the

declaration of the gospel which Paul had made must be false, idle, and powerless, and the faith with which the Corinthians had received such a statement must be also useless, groundless, and vain. And it would follow too, that Paul and his fellow apostles would be proved to be false witnesses in the solemn matters relating to God; inasmuch as they have declared that God had raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, which could not have been the fact if it were true that the resurrection of any one to life again after having died was an impossible thing. If this were really an impossibility then it could not be that Jesus had risen from the grave; and if it be not true that Jesus has risen from the grave, then faith in him would be a delusion and of no use in our salvation: he must have been an impostor, and it would be in vain to expect that he could pardon sins; and sin being unpardoned would yet be charged upon the soul of the sinner. While this would be the condition of those professing christians who were yet living, what would be the state of those who had died in the confidence of that faith which rested upon the truth of that Lord, whom they believed after dying for their sins, to having overcome death, and risen again for their justification? All such persons having died with a false hope would have perished, if the hope of a christian was to be confined to what he received from christianity in this present life. And if his expectations in the life to come were to be disappointed, surely he might be looked upon as one more to be pitied than any other man, or class of men.

But the apostle turns from considering the denial of the doctrine, in order to repeat strongly the affirmation of its truth, and to confirm his earnest declaration by explaining the subject in several particulars. Christ, he says, is in fact risen from amongst the dead, being made with respect to those who have died, what the sheaf of the first ripe corn was to the whole harvest. It was given to the Lord as an earnest that all the sheaves that followed were his: even so Jesus, the first to rise from amongst those who died, was the earnest of the general resurrection that shall follow in its time. Death was brought into the world by the sin of a man, and so by the atonement of a man the

sentence of death is taken off, and the resurrection of the dead procured. In consequence of the act of Adam all mankind who are born of him were subjected to death; and in like manner, in consequence of the act of Christ, all mankind shall be raised up again from death. But in this universal resurrection each individual person shall be ranked in the class to which he properly belongs. Three of these classes are mentioned. The Lord Jesus Christ stands alone, as the firstfruits from the dead: his resurrection took place first. The next order of men who will be raised to life from amongst the dead, will be those persons who belong to Christ by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit: and their resurrection will take place at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ on his return from heaven to earth. The third class of men who will be raised to life, will consist of the remainder of mankind; whose resurrection will take place at what is called by the apostle "the end." The distinction between the end, and the time of Christ's "coming," may be understood, by referring to the book of the Revelation, where two resurrections are spoken of: the first, which will include those who are "blessed and holy," and another resurrection at the end of a thousand years; ("the *rest of the dead* lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Rev. xx. 5, 6.) In the passage before us the two periods for resurrection are marked, but by similar words, both mean "afterward," although our translators have used "*then*" in one place. The meaning would be more distinctly seen, if it were read thus; "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming; afterward cometh the end." More than eighteen hundred years have passed since the resurrection of Christ the firstfruits; and we are still waiting for the coming of the Lord and the realizing of the first resurrection, some particulars of which had already been described by the apostle in writing to the Thessalonians. (1 Thess. iv. 14—17.) And as so long a space of time is assuredly included in the period intended by the first "afterward," there can be no difficulty in supposing that the second "afterward" may refer to the end of the period of a thou-

sand years after the first resurrection, as explained in the vision of the Apocalypse.

Consistently with this view, we find that "the end" here spoken of as the third period of rising again, is that time when the Lord Jesus Christ (having exercised the kingly power until he shall have subdued every enemy, everything that claims authority irrespective of His own,) will resign into the hands of the Almighty Father that special dominion which, for the great purposes of redemption, was committed to him as the Son of man—the Anointed One. (Matt. xxviii. 18. John xiii. 3; v. 22.) This dominion of the Christ must continue until every enemy is subdued, according to the prophecy in Psalm cx., in which Jehovah said unto Him, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The opposing influence that will be last destroyed will be that terrible power over men which resulted from sin—the power of death. Christ's reign as king must continue until this last enemy shall have been utterly overcome; seeing that Jehovah has placed *everything* within the dominion of the Son. Of course however this universal supremacy given by the Almighty Father cannot be supposed to include the Supreme donor of this dominion himself. This kingly rule then of the Lord Jesus Christ is to continue, until everything shall have been brought into entire subjection to him: and when this shall have been accomplished by the Son of God in his human nature, then in that nature he shall place himself in subjection to the Almighty One who appointed this supreme rule of the Christ, which will then have fulfilled its utmost purpose; and so the Godhead shall be supreme alone, working all things directly without the intervention of a Mediator, even as in the beginning before the fall of man.

After this explanation of the three orders of resurrection, the Apostle resumes the argument which he had interrupted in order to make his strong affirmation of the resurrection of Christ (verse 20). If the hope of christians was to be confined to what they received through christianity in this life, none would be more to be pitied. In that case, what would become of those christians who

had fearlessly filled up the ranks of the Lord's army, when they who had been enrolled before them were mown down by martyrdom? If there be no resurrection of the dead, why do they come forward one after another upon each occasion of cruel death, realizing the proverb "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church?" If there be no resurrection, how is it that every christian consented to live day by day and hour by hour in the constant risk of sacrificing his life, rather than deny Christ. This seems to be upon the whole the best solution of the difficulty which exists with respect to the expression "baptized for the dead," which has much engaged the criticism of the learned. The apostle represents the members of the christian church as forming the ranks of an army in battle. Just as soldiers in the rear speedily stepped forward over the killed to take the place they had occupied, and it might be to fall in their turn; so the constancy and courage manifested by christian martyrs, though put to the most cruel deaths, only produced such an admiration of their conduct, such a sense of the power which supported them, as made many renounce paganism and willingly take the martyrs' place, by enlisting under the banner of Christ, even at the hazard of their lives. The literal translation of the Greek might rather be "else what shall they do, who are baptized over, or in the room of, the dead."

At the mention of the danger in which christians continually stood, St. Paul refers to his own individual experience; he solemnly declares that he himself lived a life in which he was daily exposed to death, and suffered as one dying. At the same time that he affirms this, he refers also to the joy which was to crown all these sufferings, whether it be the joy of the Corinthian christians in the possession of that grace by which their salvation was secured, or the joy of his own stedfast hope that they would be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20);—a hope to which he afterwards referred in writing to the Corinthians the second time. (2 Cor. i. 7—12.) This rejoicing, whether of one or the other kind, he possessed through the grace and favour of Christ. As to his sufferings to which he was alluding, take

for instance the danger to which he had been exposed at Ephesus, (Acts xix. 21—47), he had there been engaged in a conflict with a multitude of men, who could be said to be no better than wild beasts. But what was the use of his exposing himself to the risk of being torn to pieces, if there was to be no rising again after death? Why not rather take up the language of the hardened Jews spoken of by the prophet, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die;" and like them, in the midst of every danger, enjoy to the utmost the present time, "slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine?" (Isa. xxii. 12, 13.)

From this argument Paul turns to earnest entreaty, not to allow themselves to be led astray by the cunning devices of those who so inconsistently denied the doctrine of the resurrection. To be the companions of such persons would tend to undermine their own faith, and to corrupt them from the simplicity of the doctrine of Christ. To express this, Paul quoted a sentence from an Athenian poet, Menander, "intercourse with evil men corrupts morality." He exhorted them to arouse from their dangerous inattention to this doctrine, that they might be quickened to righteousness by a consideration of it. To follow false doctrine would lead them into sin; and he warned them the more especially, because there were some among them who were ignorant of the true God, and therefore the more likely to be misguided by those who held false notions on the resurrection. That such ignorance should exist, after all the opportunities of knowledge the Corinthians had, Paul felt to be disgraceful to them.

He now proceeds to meet some objections which might be made by those who denied the doctrine of the resurrection. Some might point out the decay of the body in the grave, and then ask by what means those who have died could possibly be made alive again, or what kind of body could they have?

As to the impossibility of rising again after the decay of the body, this was a foolish objection to make; since an attentive observation even of things in nature might be enough to shew, not only the possibility, but the ordinary occurrence of such a restoration to form after decay.

The corn that is put into the ground does not grow and spring into vegetable life, until it has passed through a process of decay, similar to that which takes place in the human body at death. What is sown is not the fruit that is afterward gathered unchanged; it is a mere grain of corn, whether of wheat, or barley, or any other kind of corn. After its decay in the earth, God by His sovereign will and power imparts to it a new bodily shape and power, when it rises again from the ground; and according to a fixed law, each particular kind of corn takes afresh a similar body—wheat springs from wheat sown—barley from barley—and so all other kinds.

Then with regard to the objector's enquiry as to what kind of bodies men could have in a resurrection state; was the Almighty in creating man limited to one kind of body? The arrangement of living creatures on the earth shewed plainly, that there are great differences in the bodies which have animal life. Men have one sort of fleshly body—animals have other sorts of bodies, adapted to their mode of existence—fishes have another, fitted for the water—and birds have another, suited to the air. Not only do these varieties exist in bodies belonging to the earth; but look up into the heavens—how different are the bodies that we can see in the heavens from any upon earth! The beauty, and splendour, and power of the heavenly bodies, how glorious! This is one class of God's creation, while the varieties of the bodies upon earth forms another and a very inferior class. In the splendour and beauty of those heavenly bodies there are also differences of degree. The sun shines with one degree of splendour, and the moon with another, the planets and fixed stars with yet another, differing in degree of light amongst themselves.

Having shewn the changes that actually take place in the growth of the grain, and the distinctions and differences evidently existing amongst the various bodies of God's creation, Paul applies the argument to the resurrection of the dead. Like the grain, man's body is also laid in the earth, and passes to corruption; but like the grain also, out of that dead body will hereafter spring another body, which shall not be subject to corruption.

Death, as the penalty of sin, reminds man of the shame of his fall, and the body is laid in the grave marked with loathsome decay by death; but out of that loathsome corpse shall spring another body, which shall be fitted for the manifestation of glory. The body is brought to the grave through the weakening influence of disease; but from it shall be raised a body endued with power that never shall be subject to failure. The body which is buried has been endued with mere animal life fitted for the present state of man's nature; but from it shall be raised a body fitted for the functions of spiritual life in heaven. As this suggests a new idea to the mind of man, the inspired apostle affirms this contrast as a certain fact. It is plain and apparent that such a thing as a natural animal body exists; and it is equally sure and certain that there is such a thing as a body adapted to the requirements of spiritual life, which he calls a spiritual body. This is according to the statement of Scripture. When Adam our first parent was created, it is said that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7), that is, his body became an animated being. But he who became the new head to the family of man—the second or last Adam, as contrasted with the first or former one—He possessing fulness of the Spirit without measure in himself, not only has life in himself, but also gives life, and quickeneth whom He will by the Holy Spirit. (John v. 21, 26.)

This arrangement follows in due order; man's spiritual body was not created first, but the natural body, and this having become subject to decay and corruption through the effect of the fall, the spiritual body is given afterwards.

In the original creation of man, Adam was made of the "dust of the ground" (Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19); this was the material of his animal body. He who afterwards came to be the head of the family of man, the second Adam, is the Lord of glory who came from heaven. Such as Adam was, with a body made of earth, such are those who were born from him in the same nature. And on the other hand, such as Jesus is in that glorified body, which having passed through death, and is ascended up on high;

even such will they become, who having by the Spirit of Christ been "made partakers of the divine nature," are become heavenly in soul. (Phil. iii. 21.) And as such persons (whom the apostle classes with himself) have in this present life carried about a nature and a body like unto the original Adam, even so will they also receive a body that shall make them like unto the spiritual body of the "Lord from heaven."

After thus arguing upon the subject of the change of the body in the resurrection, Paul sums up his argument by strongly declaring to them, that the human body, in its present condition made of flesh and blood, cannot possibly enter into that kingdom of God which shall be administered, when the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." It is a kingdom "incorruptible and that fadeth not away" (Rev. xi. 15. 1 Pet. i. 4): whatever therefore is tainted with corruption (as man's natural body is) cannot inherit that which is altogether free from such taint. The apostle proceeds to declare a truth hitherto unknown to them respecting this great matter. All christians will not indeed die, some will remain alive when the Lord Jesus returns from heaven; but though some will not die, yet the body of every christian (whether found amongst the quick or the dead) will pass through a change rapidly—instantaneously; one which will occupy no more time than that which the eyelid takes to wink. When at the last the trumpet shall sound, those christians who have died shall be called from their graves, and in rising shall be found in spiritual bodies no more subject to corruption; while the quick, or those who shall be living at that great day, (amongst whom St. Paul supposes that he himself might possibly be one), shall have their bodies changed without having passed through death. Whether a christian have died or remained amongst the living, this natural body subject to the corruption of the fall, must be clothed in incorruption, and that which has been subject to death, must be freed from his power and rendered incapable of dying; "that," as the apostle afterwards said, "mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 4.) When this great change shall have taken place, then will be

fulfilled that part of the prophecy of Isaiah, in which it is foretold, that "the Lord of Hosts will swallow up death in victory." (Isa. xxxv. 8.) At this thought, the apostle's deep interest in the subject breaks forth into a triumphant exclamation referring to the passage in Hosea (xiii. 14):—What piercing sting could death be said to have, when so glorious a prospect lay open before the christian! What victory could the terrors of the place of departed spirits ever produce! It is sin alone which is the sting of death,—the only thing that makes death bitter; the power of that bitter sting was derived from the strictness of God's holy law, every transgression of which brings the transgressor under the guilt: but Paul joyfully returns thanks to God, that He has given us all the benefit of the victory which Jesus Christ achieved by his perfect fulfilment of the law.

All the apostle's inspired arguments and declarations on this subject were closed by a practical exhortation. Being certified and satisfied of the great truth, that there will assuredly be such a resurrection as he had explained, christians should remain stedfast in the faith, never moved from the hope that is set before them, but always looking upward to the Lord, and forward to his coming, striving with diligence to abound in all obedience to the Lord's command, knowing that, however great the labor, it shall be found not to have been in vain at the resurrection from the dead.

APPLICATION.

82. We do not often perceive the close connection that all the important truths of the gospel have with each other; and hence it happens, that the foundations of our faith are sometimes put in great peril, by a disregard or neglect of some doctrine, upon which we fail to build ourselves up with scriptural authority. A clever enemy of the truth may easily take advantage of this weakness upon a point not felt to be important, until the influence of unbelief has shaken our comfort on other points connected with it, where we thought ourselves secure. The resurrection of the dead is one of these essential *doctrines* which is more commonly neglected than dis-

believed, until we find that the absence of faith has made way for unbelief. The apostle proves, with masterly power, that no one can effectually receive the gospel who does not believe, that after the spirit has been separated from the body by what we call death, it shall again be connected with the body, in a form which shall have grown out of the natural body in its previous state. This is the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; a doctrine which the Lord Jesus Christ, having taught while he was upon the earth before his death, proved and exemplified in his own person, after having truly submitted to death; his spirit remaining separated from his body one whole day and parts of two others. If the expectation of such a resurrection as his for his people were an unreal imagination, then the Lord Jesus Christ would be false in giving rise to that expectation; and the people who state that they saw him alive after he had died and been buried, would be false, as testifying to things which could not by possibility be true. From this it plainly appears, that to profess to be a christian, and yet not to believe in the resurrection of the dead, is in fact a contradiction in terms. The truth is, that just in proportion as we realize the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, we become more earnest in the exercise of real christianity; and just in proportion as our hearts experience the power of the Spirit of Christ, we become more deeply settled in the anticipations connected with a firm belief in the resurrection of the dead.

83. The grand truth of the gospel—that which stands first, and which Paul had first preached to the Corinthians—is the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinless man, in consequence of that substitution by which he took upon him our sins; as in the Old Testament is so frequently predicted, that he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and that with his stripes we are healed. This is the gospel—the good news; the reception of which unites us to Christ, and makes us partakers of the benefit of the salvation thus wrought for us. But as death is the curse and penalty imposed upon

sin, by taking our real sins he became obnoxious to real death; and therefore it is of the utmost importance that the fact of his true death should be clearly established, and firmly believed; for which reason the burial of his corpse is included as one of the essential points of faith. Without this, the doctrine of the resurrection could not be established. But Christ having died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and having been buried, his return to life has been certified to us by those who saw him living after his death,—walking upon the earth after his burial. The apostle enumerates some of these witnesses, and includes himself in the list. Having such testimony to such a fact, the contemplation of it ought to occupy the christian's mind, as an abiding security, both for the victory over death by Him who died for our sins, and for a personal share in that victory at the future resurrection of those whose sins will be therefore blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. (Acts iii. 19.)

84. We learn from this portion, not only the fact of the resurrection of the dead, but also the universality of it. We experience, alas! the universality of death, the fruit of Adam's sin; and we are assured of the universality of the resurrection, the fruit of Christ's death. All die in Adam: all shall be made alive in Christ. It is the important "BUT" which follows those inspired words, that makes the matter they contain so awfully solemn. Though every man will be "made alive," each man will rise in the rank and order properly belonging to him. The man Jesus Christ has already risen from the grave, proving the truth of his declarations, and constituting the firstfruits of a future harvest. Those who are joined to Christ in this life by the Holy Spirit, and so are become his (as the members of a body belong to the head) these shall form the next order of the resurrection; and these shall be admitted into the joy of their Lord; for "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power." (Rev. xx. 6.) But then comes the last order of the resurrection, which will *include* all those who had not part in that first resurrection.

These are classed in the resurrection as "the rest of the dead," which shall not live again until the blessed and holy ones of the first resurrection shall long have entered into their joy. (Rev. xx. 5.) As the resurrection of Christ proves the certainty of the resurrection of those subsequent classes, it leaves upon us, who are still in this life, the duty of making the solemn enquiry, whether each of us in particular is to rise in the next coming rank, and so make part of the first resurrection,—or whether we shall be amongst the last rank, and so live again only with the rest of the dead. In the one case we shall rise to eternal happiness; in the other, to everlasting misery.

85. From the intimation here given by the Holy Spirit, that after the putting down of all enemies, the Son also himself shall be subject unto Him that put all things under him that God may be all in all, we are led to contemplate something more of the magnitude of the sacrifice made for the atonement of sin, than we are usually induced to do from other portions of scripture. When the eternal Son of God, who is "equal with the Father as touching his Godhead," took flesh, and was "made of a woman, made under the law," he became "inferior to the Father as touching his manhood." While in the mystery of the Godhead he must ever abide "equal to the Father as touching his Godhead," it is also true that in "the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," he will ever remain "inferior to the Father as touching his manhood." However great the mystery from the inadequate nature of our present capacities, faith gives a realizing view of this great wonder of love; and in proportion as, by contemplating this abiding humiliation of the Son of God, we enlarge our estimate of the immensity of his sacrifice, we reach forward to a more overwhelming sense of the unspeakable love which produced so vast a sacrifice; and thus we are able to feel more of that truth "God is love."

86. The explanation given above, of the expression "baptized in the room of the dead," suggests to the mind the striking power of God's grace, manifested in the

support he affords to those who are "persecuted for righteousness' sake." The evidence thus afforded of the reality of that faith which imparts such courage, has often been made the means of carrying conviction home to the heart when other means have failed. This should form an additional motive for the exercise of christian courage, under any of those lesser trials to which we may be exposed in the present day, although the fire of persecution is now so far restrained, that our lives are safe from the malice of the enemy. It is a blessed thought that we may so manifest our own faith, as that others may thereby be drawn to glorify God in the day of their visitation; and the hope that even we may be made instrumental to so blessed an end, may well operate to strengthen us in time of weakness; so that we may walk with christian calmness through the dangers, the trials, and the temptations, that upon some occasions evidently surround the people of God.

87. St. Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit's power, has adopted, and therefore endowed with scriptural authority, an important truth that had been uttered by an uninspired writer. The experience of human nature very often takes the form of proverbial expressions, which may be said to constitute the unintended testimony of man to the truth of God's wisdom in His word. When the wise man said, with the authority of inspiration, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Prov. xiii. 20), he substantially put forth the same truth as did the Athenian poet, when he wrote, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." It is impossible to continue in the ordinary intercourse of society with persons, whose tone of mind and habits of thought, flow in the current of evil, without imperceptibly being drawn into the same current, and losing by degrees that firm standing upon the principles of truth, with which we might have begun to mix with such company. The vague notions of unbelief practically deny the resurrection of the dead, by laying aside the influence which would result from a realizing hope of future blessedness, and fear of future misery. These notions, so

congenial to the natural heart, are easily gathered into the mind from the conversation of those who live in that practical unbelief, although they do not utter a defined denial of the doctrine. Its influence is thus established in the mind the more surely, because it is undefined; and when the temptation to self-indulgence and worldly gratification becomes strong, then it is found that these evil communications have corrupted those good manners with which the unsuspecting christian first entered into intercourse with worldly friends and acquaintances.

88. We have in this passage a remarkable illustration of the truth expressed by our Lord, when he said "but of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." (Mark xiii. 32.) Though St. Paul was gifted with grace in an especial manner, and was made the instrument of conveying to the church many important particulars connected with the Lord's return; yet he was not only unacquainted with the time when it was likely to happen, but the period was hidden from him in such a manner, as to leave him with the expectation, as a possibility, that it might happen even while he himself was yet alive. This is not inconsistent with the explanation, which he had given to the Thessalonian church in his second epistle to them, of the statement he had made in the first; it only shews that the "falling away," and the revelation of the "man of sin," which he declared were to happen before hand, were events of which he could not tell the time or duration, so that he imagined they might both possibly happen before his own life would terminate in the course of nature. In the first epistle to the Thessalonians the apostle had already given an instance of the manner, in which his mind habitually contemplated the possibility of his being one of "the quick" at the coming of the Lord (1 Thess. iv. 15—17); but in the present portion this occurs still more strikingly. He speaks here of the whole body of christians, using the first person plural as being one of that body. He says, we christians shall not all die, (sleep being the word by which he expresses the separation of the soul from the body.) He contrasts this with the fact, that though *all* would not die,

yet that the bodies of all would be changed;—"*we* shall all be changed." Having thus identified himself with the whole company of Christ's people, speaking in both instances of them *all*, he proceeds to draw the distinction between the quick and the dead,—between those whose bodies shall be changed after passing through death, and those upon whose bodies the change shall pass without their having died. If in doing this he had had no thought concerning his own lot personally, he would have made use of the third person plural, and he would have written they *the dead*, and *they* the quick; but in making the distinction, he clearly shows that, in his own mind, he placed himself amongst those who shall be changed without passing through death, by speaking of this latter class in the first person plural, while he uses the third person in speaking of the former; he says "the dead *(they)* shall be raised incorruptible, and *we* (that is, the quick) shall be changed." Two important points of application result from this. How watchful we should be for the signs which may warn us of the approach of the Lord upon his return to gather his saints to him!—how careful we should be, lest, by attempting to fix in our minds the very day and hour, which not even Paul was permitted to know, we should destroy the very ground of that watchfulness which is so essential to keep us "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord;" knowing, as we do assuredly, that if we belong to Christ by his Spirit now, whether it be sooner or later, our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

QUESTIONS.

How often do I contemplate the results of the resurrection of the dead? What are my own anticipations in this respect? and with what power do I realize them?

To whom do I attribute the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? What are my thoughts in connection with his burial and resurrection?

What grounds have I for hoping that I shall be found amongst the blessed ones at the first resurrection? What enjoyment or advantage which this present life can afford me, whether procured by sin or not, will compensate for my

being absent from the first resurrection, and raised only with the rest of the dead?

Have I been accustomed to limit my notion of the manhood of the Lord Jesus Christ only to the duration of a few thousand years? What effect has this limitation upon my love for him? How much does that love gain in strength and power, by considering him as continuing everlastingly the Son of man?

In times of trouble, what advantage have I taken of my personal trials to exhibit the power of God's grace controling my natural fears?

How do I maintain a lively sense of the resurrection of the dead, and the resurrection prospects of a christian, when I am in the midst of worldly society, from which the subject is excluded?

Am I endeavouring to fix in my mind what will be the precise time of the Lord's appearing? or am I watching for the signs which, from his word, I may expect as tokens of the great crisis?

Can I say that my anticipation of the resurrection of the dead leads me to be more abounding in the work of the Lord?

THE PRAYER.

Thou gracious Saviour, who wast dead and art alive again, and who livest for ever more; send thy spirit to take of the things of thy resurrection, and so shew them to my heart, that I may contemplate the glory and the joy of that day when I shall awake up in thy likeness and be satisfied. I acknowledge, O Lord, the greatness of my sins which thou didst bear even unto death, the fearful penalty of sin. Thou wast wounded for my transgressions, thou was bruised for my iniquities; but as thou didst bear them on the cross, so are they buried with thee in the grave, and as thou hast risen sinless and glorified, so shalt thou appear again without sin unto salvation. I beseech thee Lord to give me such grace by thy Spirit, that being conformed to thine image here, I may be changed into thy likeness hereafter, that I may be one of those who are blessed and holy at the first resurrection. Let me not be found among the rest of the dead, reserved for final judg-

ment according to the law, but graciously vouchsafe that I may be partaker of thy salvation according to the gospel. O merciful Saviour, how hast thou emptied thyself of thy glory for us miserable sinners! Let my love enlarge and abound more and more, in proportion as I learn more of the length, and breadth, and height, and depth of thy love which passeth knowledge. Make me to love thee with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and so to manifest my love, that those around me may see thy power in my life, and learn to glorify thee in the day of their visitation. Guard me from the contagion of evil in the company of the world, and make me so to look forward to the morning of the resurrection, that I may be ever watchful to observe its early dawn in all the tokens given in thy word, as I know not the day when the Son of Man cometh. Make me to be ever stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work thou givest me to do, knowing that my labor shall not be in vain, according to thy faithful word. AMEN.

TWENTIETH PORTION.

May God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, give me the Holy Spirit, that I may understand this portion of His Holy Word, and profit by it. AMEN.

THE SCRIPTURE.

1 CORINTHIANS XVI.

INDEX WORDS.		XVI.
Almsgathering	1	NOW concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia,
how	2	even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.
by whom sent	3	AND when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send to bring your liberality [*gift*] unto Jerusalem.
perhaps with Paul	4	AND if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.
Paul will come	5	NOW I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: FOR I do pass through Macedonia.
perhaps stay	6	AND it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, THAT ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.
not now	7	FOR I will not see you now by the way; BUT I trust to tarry awhile with you, if the Lord permit.
at Ephesus now	8	BUT I will tarry at Ephesus until Pente-
	9	cost. FOR a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries.
As to Timothy	10	NOW if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: FOR he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also *do*.
	11	Let no man THEREFORE despise him: BUT conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.
As to Apollos	12	AS TOUCHING *our* brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: BUT his will was not at all to come at this time; BUT he will come when he shall have convenient time.

Exhortation	13	Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like
	14	men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.
submission to ministers	15	I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have addicted themselves to the
	16	ministry of the saints,) THAT ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with *us*, and laboureth.
messengers from Corinth	17	I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: FOR that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.
	18	FOR they have refreshed my spirit and your's: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.
Salutation of the churches, &c.	19	The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.
	20	All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.
Salutation of Paul himself	21	The salutation of *me* Paul with mine
	22	hand. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema
	23	Maran-atha. The grace of our Lord
	24	Jesus Christ *be* with you. My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

EXPLANATION.

Paul had now closed the subjects of his letter to the Corinthians; to which he adds some remarks on several matters relating to circumstances then present. He first refers to the contributions towards the support of the poor christians of the original church of the circumcision. We find him thus fulfilling the engagement made about three years before in the conference at Jerusalem, when the necessity for christians to submit to Jewish rites was discussed. The result of that conference was, that the church at Jerusalem was set right upon the point. James, Peter, and John, who were at the head of it, fully consented to the arrangement by which the duty of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles was committed to Paul and Barnabas, in the same manner as the preaching of the gospel to the Jews had been committed especially to Peter. Only one condition was required, in which Paul and Barnabas entirely concurred. The apostles at Jerusalem thought it right that those who went to the heathen should excite the liberality of the Gentile christians on

behalf of the poorer christians of the original church of the circumcision.

We find the apostle fulfilling this part of the arrangement with special care. In the several congregations throughout the province of Galatia, he had settled the manner in which the contributions might be most conveniently collected, and had left directions to that effect; and now he appoints the same rule for the christians at Corinth. The rule was this;—on each return of the Lord's day, every member of the church was to consider to what extent God had been pleased to bless him with success in his worldly circumstances. Then making this prosperity the relative measure of his bounty, every one should set apart such a portion of his substance as would bear a just proportion to his prosperity; and by putting money to this amount aside, the trouble and inconvenience of separate collections, when the apostle himself arrived, would be avoided. Then, on his arrival, the Corinthian church would only have to nominate some of their members, whom they thought fit to be entrusted with the charge of the money; and Paul would dispatch them to Jerusalem, with letters of introduction to the christian friends in that city. If it should turn out to be right for Paul himself to go to Jerusalem, the messengers whom the Corinthians might nominate should accompany him.

He tells the Corinthians that it was his purpose to come to Corinth, after having finished his journey through Macedonia; it being his intention to travel that way. Perhaps when he got to Corinth, he would make some stay, and even pass the winter there, that he might receive the assistances from them necessary for his subsequent journey. He did not however mean to come round at that time by Corinth into Macedonia, (though such had been his intention, as he tells the Corinthians in his second epistle, stating at the same time his reasons for altering the plan, 2 Cor. i. 15, 16, 23); but he hoped afterwards to pay them a longer visit, if it should please God in his providence to enable him to do so. His intention, at the time he wrote, was to remain at Ephesus over the season of Pentecost, for he found many opportunities opened before him, and much blessing evidently attended his preaching of the

gospel; though there were also numbers of persons, who resisted and opposed the truth.

Timothy had been already sent by the apostle from Ephesus to Corinth, before Paul had received the letter to which this epistle was a reply (see Introduction, page 6); and now the apostle charged the Corinthians to receive him when he arrived in such a manner as would give him confidence amongst them, so that he might remain there without molestation. He bid them remember that Timothy was an appointed minister of God, as well as Paul himself; no person therefore ought to look down upon him, or undervalue him. Timothy was a young man; and as Paul, in writing to him afterwards, urged him to exemplary conduct, that no man might despise his youth (1 Tim. iv. 12), we may conclude that the apostle anticipated the probability of his being despised, because of his youth, amongst the Corinthians, who were so proud of their spiritual gifts. But Paul charged them to treat him affectionately in parting from him on his return, as the apostle was expecting him back with the whole party whom he had sent to Corinth.

We find by the mention here made of Apollos, that he had returned from Corinth, and was with Paul at Ephesus. The apostle tells the Corinthian church, that he had been very desirous of inducing Apollos to go to Corinth along with Timothy and his companions. Apollos however was far from being disposed to go upon that occasion; though he intended to pay the Corinthians a visit, when circumstances should make it convenient for him to go.

Then, as though he were about finally to close the epistle, he urges them to be watchful and constant in the holy faith of the gospel. He bids them act courageously, and like men, in the midst of the difficulties that surrounded them—and to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph. vi. 10); and with all their strength, to let everything be done under the power of the Divine Spirit of love, of which he had just before given so interesting a description.

Stephanas being one of the three messengers who had brought the letter from Corinth, Paul took the opportunity afforded by the circumstance, to speak of that person's

devotedness to hospitable and affectionate care for his fellow christians; probably alluding to the manner in which he received such as were strangers in the city of Corinth. This family had been the first converts to christianity in the province of Achaia, having been baptized by Paul himself, as he had already stated in the beginning of this letter. (1 Cor. i. 16) He exhorted the Corinthian christians to shew due reverence and respect to all persons who, like Stephanas, acted so self-denying a part among his brethren, as well as to those who were fellow-labourers with Paul, associated with him in the ministerial work.

The apostle expresses his gratification that the Corinthians had sent the three messengers Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus: they had made up to him what had been deficient on the part of the Corinthian Christians, whether in the information conveyed in their letter, or in respectful attention and manifestation of kindness. They had thus cheered and comforted the apostle, and in so doing had equally benefited the Corinthian christians. He therefore desired them again to shew due respect and grateful affection to persons who had been thus useful.

He next conveys brotherly and affectionate regards to the Corinthians from the communities of christians in the country round about Ephesus; which was called in a more especial manner "Asia." Amongst these he distinguishes Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who must have been acquainted with many individual christians at Corinth, (see introduction, pages 1 and 4); these with their christian family sent an especial message of love. All the christians in Ephesus also joined in kindly salutations to those at Corinth; and the apostle desires them to convey the greeting in the usual manner, by the kiss of friendship amongst each other.

It has been already explained, that Paul was evidently in the habit of dictating his epistles to some one who wrote them down; while at the end of each he usually added some short sentence in his own handwriting, as a kind of authenticating signature; he states this to be his custom in his second epistle to the Thessalonians. (2 Thess. iii. 17.) Upon the present occasion he added his salutations with his own hand; together with a solemn warning

and authoritative sentence, that if any one does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, he was to be excommunicated, inasmuch as he would be accursed. This is the meaning of the word Anathema; and the word Maranatha, which upon this occasion is joined to it by the apostle, is an expression in the Syriac Chaldee language, the interpretation of which is, "the Lord cometh, or will come." Thus connected with the apostle's anathema, it conveys the declaration that the Lord will come to execute the fearful sentence thus denounced, and adds an awful solemnity to the warning.

The apostolic benediction follows, by which Paul prays that the blessing of Christ's favor may be with the christians at Corinth, and he adds the assurance of his personal affection in Christ Jesus towards them all, concluding with the emphatic word of sincerity—amen.

APPLICATION.

89. The direction in this portion, concerning the collection for the saints, stamps with apostolic sanction an arrangement for the regulation of almsgiving, which would be attended with the most beneficial results if it were generally adopted by christians. It is evident as a matter of business, that men engaged in worldly concerns, would be wise in obtaining a clear calculation of their gains or losses week by week; and a rule to balance accounts every Saturday night, might be approved of and adopted by many persons. But a christian has an additional reason for this custom; it would enable him to lay by him in store a just proportion of what God has been pleased to bestow, in order that it might be devoted to such acts of benevolence as the spirit of christian charity would prompt. In complicated concerns however, such weekly calculations may become inconvenient, if not impossible: but the principle upon which the arrangement proceeds may be acted upon with advantage, whether the balances of gain and loss be struck monthly, quarterly, or annually. A christian should determine, not that a certain fixed amount, but that a certain relative proportion of his income, should be devoted to imparting

good to others; and this proportion should in ordinary cases involve the necessity of some self-denial at least, according to the station which God has been pleased to appoint for each individual.

90. The apostle's detailed statement of reference to his plans,—his greetings and his feelings towards the Corinthians, manifest that paternal solicitude which appears more or less in all his writings to those whom he had been the instrument of bringing to Christ. His desire to pass some time with the Corinthians—his wish to afford them the opportunity of giving vent to right feelings towards himself,—his interest in individuals,—all these bring him within reach of men's ordinary affections, which are thereby interwoven with the spiritual affections that were the foundation of all these feelings, and direct the heart to God through the medium of the brotherly and social feelings. With all this flow of kindly love however, the apostle loses no opportunity of exhorting them to watchfulness, constancy, courage, charity, in connection with the faith that is in Christ Jesus. This is the combination which gives effect to christian teaching; whether it be more eminently in the ministerial character, or in the more ordinary communication of christian instruction in the familiar intercourse of christian life.

91. The anathema of the apostle receives an awful sanction from the word with which he connects it. The denunciation of God's wrath upon those who love not the Lord Jesus Christ, are no idle words. They would be such indeed, if they were the outbreak of man's wrath, unmerited and unsanctioned: in that case, their only effect would be that as they love cursing, so it should happen to them. (Psa. cix. 17, 18.) But it is an awful reality, that those who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ will find themselves cast out of the presence of the Almighty, where alone can be joy for evermore; and it enhances the terror of that judgment, that the Lord himself is coming to the earth again to execute it. Then shall the happiness of those who are called to enter into the joy of their Lord stand forth, contrasted with the

exclusion of those to whom the Lord will say "depart from me all ye workers of iniquity;" thus accomplishing the "Anathema Maranatha" of the apostle. This Maranatha he is ever mingling with the encouragements, as well as the warnings of his inspired declarations: "Be careful for nothing, the Lord is at hand." He places the great truth of Christ's return more frequently in the position of encouragement, than in the connection in which it stands in the close of this epistle; yet it is equally applicable to both classes of mankind, for while "he shall be revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ;" he shall also come "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

QUESTIONS.

What is the amount which I usually bestow year by year in assisting others by alms and donations? what proportion does it bear to my income? what self-denial does it involve? upon what plan do I act in setting it apart for the purpose?

How is my affection for my fellow christians generally testified? What use do I make of my opportunities of intercourse for the introduction of christian truth and christian exhortation?

What effect is produced upon me by the certainty that the Lord will come? Have I reason to fear that he will then execute on me the apostolic anathema, or to hope that he will call me to enter into the joy of my Lord?

THE PRAYER.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into my heart that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtue, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee; dispose my heart by that Spirit to deny myself, that I may be able to impart to others those things which they need, and which thou hast given to me. Make me to feel the still greater benefit of communicating the bread of life; and teach me so to love others in Christ Jesus to

their eternal benefit, that I may lose no opportunity of speaking of the things belonging to their eternal peace. Shed thy love abroad in my heart, that loving thee above all things, I may long for thy appearing, looking forward to be admitted into the joy of my Lord; and grant that I may so love thee now, that it may be plain thou hast redeemed me from the curse of the law, thou who hast been made a curse for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. AMEN.

An Index of the Explanations given in this Volume; that is, an account of the principal subjects arranged in the order of the alphabet; so that the reader may find out where to turn for the explanation of any subject he wishes.

[The letter (a) at the end of the line, shews that the subject is to be found in the Application. When this is not put, the subject is to be found in the Explanation.]

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